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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES FOR THE MODERN MINISTER

By Professor Philip Vollmer, Ph.D., D.D.

We are living in serious but great times. In the words of Schiller, "Old things are passing away, the times are changing; but out of the ruins of the old new life is springing." Modern civilization is at present slowly but surely passing through another of its great historical turning points towards a new social order. The world is in the throes of a tremendous social revolution, or its aftermath, partly of a bloody nature as in Germany, Russia and China, partly silent, as in England, India, Africa, France, Italy and the United States. These silent or thundering revolutions have accentuated old social problems and raised new ones. Everywhere, all classes of the people discuss the problems of the church and the changing order, of democracy and dictatorship, of the modern family and the youth movement, of nationalism and the international mind, of imperialism and extensive war preparedness, of the new woman and the old moralities, of the rise of the labor class and of communism. Men call these problems burning and pressing, and so they appear to all who have a mind trained to interpret the signs of the times.

In this new epoch of human history, which the World War has ushered in, the demand becomes louder every day, inside and outside of the Church, at home and abroad, that the churches should make a much larger contribution to world reconstruction than

hitherto, by a more fearless discharge of their peculiar mission as God's prophets to the nations, that is, by a stricter and more uncompromising proclamation of the social gospel in the sense in which Christ, according to the New Testament, taught it, so that the new civilization which at present is in the making may not only be new but also better and higher for individual and group life.

As all the perplexing problems with which the world is grappling are more or less of a social and economic nature, it follows that the churches must equip their ministers more adequately than hitherto for their part in the struggle, enabling them to discern and rightly interpret the signs of the times, to understand what it is all about, what the millions of men are agonizing for, what the church is to bless and what to condemn. Hence the great value and importance of an adequate study of the social sciences for the successful work confronting the minister of Christ's gospel in these modern times. For in order to proceed intelligently in the effort to Christianize the new social order, the leaders must know precisely what the old and dying order really is, what the new demands are, and what principles Christ urges for a better world. In the words of Rev. R. Todt, the co-laborer of Dr. Stoecker in Germany, "Whoever would understand the social question and would contribute to its solution, must have on his right hand the works on political economy, on his left the platform of socialism and before him the New Testament."

What Is Meant by the Social Sciences?

As distinguished from the groups of the natural, the philosophical, the historical, the linguistic, the theological and other sciences, we understand by the social sciences the whole group of studies which deal with men in their group relations, "socius" meaning comrade, companion. Like all sciences in this age of research and specialization, the social science group also has branched out into a network of chief- and subdivisions. Perhaps the best classification is that given by Blackman and Gillin in "Outlines of Sociology," as follows:

I. *Sociology.*—Social origins, social evolution, social psychology, social pathology, social control, history of sociology.

II. *Economics.*—Economic theories and institutions, taxation and finance, labor legislation, banking and monetary theories, industrial history.

III. *Politics or Civics.*—Political theories, national administration, diplomacy and international law, municipal administration, history of politics.

IV. *Ethics.*—Principles of ethics, social ethics, history of ethics.

V. *Anthropology.*—Ethnology, ethnography, archaeology.

VI. *History.*—Historical geography, history of institutions, and civilization.

VII. *Comparative Religion.*—History of religion, philosophy and psychology of religion.

It is of course not to be expected that the average minister of the gospel should be intimately acquainted with all of these branches of the social sciences, but with the following he should certainly have a "speaking acquaintance." (1) *Sociology,* which treats of the beginnings, the history, the structure, the institutions, the diseases of human society and their healing. (2) *Economics* or political economy, which treats of national housekeeping, that is, of the creation, distribution and consumption of goods and services necessary for the satisfaction of human wants. (3) *Politics* or Civics, which is the science of government treating of the origin, form and function of the state. (4) *Social ethics,* which is the science of public morality, dealing with social ideals and standards of group living.

The Importance of the Social Sciences to the Minister

First. An adequate knowledge of the social sciences will enable a pastor to discharge all the multitudinous duties of the Christian ministry with greater efficiency and more success. The function of the Church in this modern world is threefold:

(1) A Prophetic Function of Social Criticism. The Church is the conscience of society. As such she must maintain her sensitiveness to social injustice and her freedom to condemn it. She must therefore preserve her independence of all social powers, whether economic or political, and all conventions, theories or institutions, as well as of her own material interests (as an institution); she must eschew all alliances and commitments whereby her readiness to declare "Thus saith the Lord" might at any moment be impaired.

(2) An Evangelical Function of Social Inspiration, by holding up the ideal of the kingdom of heaven and its progressive realization in a Christian commonwealth and a commonwealth of mankind; by enlisting the solemn and joyous service of men as fellow-workers with God in His "new creation;" by quickening and hallowing all social impulse and endeavor with the motive of Christian love.

(3) A Pastoral Function of Social Sympathy, with special care, after the manner of Jesus, for the socially "unfit"—for the weak, the poor, the erring and the fallen. This feature, so prominent in the personal ministry of Jesus and the example of the early church, must never be allowed to become less conspicuous. The glory of the Church is to "preach the Gospel to the poor."

These functions the minister may discharge successfully only in the measure that he understands the principles and laws operating in human society. Effective Christian preaching is not the presentation of the truths of Christ's Gospel in an abstract and a haphazard manner but their application to the present concrete conditions and needs of men as individuals and in their social group relations. Hence, just like a successful farmer, a teacher of religion needs to know soils as well as seeds.

Secondly. Sociological knowledge will open the minister's eyes to those definite concrete conditions as do in a special manner hinder the success of the churches in their race-uplifting work. Among these conditions are the intense struggle for existence, the incessant conflict between capital and labor, and the estrangement of the masses, especially of laboring men, from the church. The great majority of working men do not care for the church, because they think the church does not care for them. The church, like the law, they say, is always on the side of capital against labor. This may not be true in the broad sense in which it is so often affirmed. But if the church had always plainly manifested the spirit of Christ, there would have been no occasion for the suspicion that she is partial to kid gloves and money bags. In the words of Rauschenbusch, "The actual results of our present social order are in acute contradiction to the Christian conceptions of justice and brotherhood." Present civilization is veneered, underneath which exists barbarism in its most malignant form. Sir Philip Gibbs recently said: "No man, unless he is drunk with optimism, can deny that the world is very sick, and it may be a sickness unto death." Proofs for this assertion abound everywhere. For example, greed for gain and power has turned legitimate commerce into wicked profiteering. The commercial giants traffic in human blood as they do in the inanimate products of the earth. Ambition for power and influence has caused politicians to juggle with the rights of the people, to prove unfaithful to their constituency, and to use public office for private gain. Ministers, especially of rich and fashionable congregations, have often apologized for these social wrongs, not so much because these servants of Christ and the Church were so exceedingly perverse, as because they were entirely ignorant of how "the other half" lives. A little wider knowledge of men and society would have given them larger and more generous sympathies.

Thirdly. The study of the social sciences will teach an intelligent minister that there are many ways to reach a desired end, and such insight may convince him that, as a rule, his peculiar contribution is to teach only the principles of righteous living, leaving the concrete measures of law and technique to general society and

the state. For equally good and clear-headed persons, while agreeing on a principle, may often disagree on the definite ways and means of carrying it into effect. For instance, the minister should on every occasion urge the abolition of poverty as a divine demand, based on the New Testament principle of equity and brotherhood; but when it comes to the question of "how", his suggestions should be given only as his personal opinions. He may favor state insurance and widows' pensions, while other equally good Christians may prefer corporation or group insurance. Again, the minister should preach that righteousness exalteth a people; but whether this ideal can best be realized by state ownership of the public wealth, or by enlightened private capitalism or by any other means must ever remain a matter of diversified opinion. Only let them be clear and definite principles which he proclaims and not glittering and hazy generalities. In the words of Professor Ely, "The church has often contented herself with repeating platitudes and vague generalities which have disturbed no guilty soul, and thus she has allowed the leadership in social reconstruction to slip away from her. It can, then, scarcely excite surprise that the labor movements have become materialistic and infidel." A phrase, "the simple Gospel," has recently been invented which according to the usual interpretation put upon it rather means an emasculated Gospel, a Gospel with one-half or three-fourths of its substance omitted, a Gospel which would keep Christians from concerning themselves about things like righteous business, fair elections, abolition of poverty, outlawry of war, etc. So when ministers hammer away at the sins of Egypt, 4000 years ago, and of Paris 4000 miles away, they are said to preach the "simple gospel"; but when they say the same things about affairs in America they are criticized for preaching politics (Vollmer, "New Testament Sociology," page 271).

Fourth. The history of the social movement will familiarize the studious minister with a number of serious lessons and warnings of which he should make frequent use in the discharge of his sacred duties. It will teach him that what is known as "Christian Civilization" is not at all identical with Christ's unvarnished Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Like a mighty river, Christianity, in its course through nineteen centuries, has been flowing through many lands and many epochs. And just as streams, in flowing, take on discolorations and accumulate sediments from the varied lands through which they flow, so Christianity has taken on discolorations from the various civilizations and philosophies through which it has flowed and has accumulated sediments from the varied organizations that have taken it in hand. It is right, therefore, that teachers of religion should critically ask, as they approach

modern Christianity, which is the clear water of life and which is the mud and silt.

Social history will also show the minister the deplorable fact that the ruling classes in past ages usually came too late with their offer of social and political concessions, thus inviting bloody revolutions, as in America (1776), in France (1789), in Germany (1848), and in Russia (1917). These facts will enable him to interpret correctly the present world-wide social unrest. It is not a specially wicked outbreak of "sin" and discontent, but a God-inspired movement of the oppressed classes demanding their rights, though their methods may often be accompanied by sin and selfishness. The present social movement simply marks another step upward in the moral development of the human race. As the English barons, in 1215, wrested some of their rights from absolutistic kingship, and the middle class in France, in 1789, triumphed over king, nobles and clergy, so since about 1848 the labor class is demanding its right to liberty, equality and the pursuit of happiness. The fact that the majority of the ministers take such an unsympathetic attitude toward the whole social movement can only be explained by the other fact that they lack knowledge of the social sciences.

History furthermore will reveal to the patriotic minister that the ruling classes have always used the church (and the church in most cases was blind enough to allow herself to be so abused) for the support of the conditions as they were and was ever ready to hurl sharp denunciations against "radical" men and parties. The result has been that all over the world millions of men and women are leaving the church, denouncing it as the "black police" for the ruling classes. In England the relation between the church and the working classes is somewhat better because all of the Christian churches have been more friendly to the working classes. Signs seem to indicate that the American churches will profit by history and follow the example of England. There is nothing inherently objectionable in the principles of the church which should repulse progressive men—just the opposite. The estrangement comes only when the churches and ministers permit themselves to be used as brakes on social progress. In that case the express train of social uplift will throw her aside, and the Lord himself may spew her out of his mouth. (Rev. 3:16). He has no use for a church which misrepresents him to the people and tries to serve God and Mammon.

Finally, a study of the history of social progress will teach the minister that many ideals of Christ's kingdom have already been realized, though the wrongs attacked seemed to be a part of the

very nature of man and of former civilizations, such as slavery, polygamy, autocracy, the American saloon, etc. This will kindle the minister's optimism as to the power and the possibilities of Christ to cast out other demons that still infest our modern civilization.

Fifth. From a more intimate knowledge of the best literature published by the advocates of the social gospel, the up-to-date minister may learn how and why the Church differs from organized socialism in her activity for the social uplift of the masses. Both agree as to the diagnosis of the diseases of modern civilization, and also as to the results to be reached. But they differ in spirit and method. Class hatred has no place in the ministrations of Christ's ministers. We must speak the truth in the spirit of Love. Love is a working principle not only for individual life and social life, but for all life. Love in the sense of good will, is the only thing that makes all things work together for good. "Love makes the home work together for good; nothing else will. Love makes the school work together for good; nothing else will. Love makes the factory work together for good; nothing else will. Love makes the nations work together for good; nothing else will. Love, and only love, will make industry work together for good; nothing else will. Everything else has failed. Law has failed, education has failed, labor unions have failed, science has failed, organization has failed, employers' associations have failed. In a word, every form of industrial organization based on force and selfishness has failed. Love, and only love, can solve our industrial problems and usher in a period of industrial peace and prosperity based on industrial justice." (Dr. John McDowell.) It is therefore true love to his rich brother and true love of country which should prompt a faithful and intelligent minister to make the ruling classes see that Christ's program alone will avert social disaster and bloodshed. For as in Daniel's day, the very men for whom the writing on the wall is meant can neither read nor interpret it. It takes a prophet of God to do that. And the church is meant to be that prophet.

The church also differs from organized socialism as to method. Radical socialism believes in miracles. It expects happiness, contentment, goodness and all social virtues to result from material comfort. But no material comfort can satisfy the restless soul within us and give us peace with ourselves and others. In the best social order conceivable men will still be filled with lust and ambition and be lashed by hate and jealousy. This is proved by millions who already live under such comfortable conditions as are urged by social reformers to be enjoyed by all. So while the socialized minister will, of course, work and pray for the kingdom of

social righteousness here on earth and now, in the form of a saved social environment, he follows Christ's method of bringing it about by stressing the demand: "Ye must be born again" (John 3:3). For the only effective ultimate solution of every social problem must lie in a change of mind and heart. The soul of all lasting improvement is the improvement of the soul. Of course! For the individual is the unit of society and enough of these units must be right before they can sustain right relations to one another.

Sixth. This accumulated knowledge of the social sciences will tend to make the minister a *better preacher,* because it will make his preaching and teaching adapted to the needs of the times, ("zeitgemaess"), instructive, inspiring and uplifting, whether it be done in the pulpit or in the Sunday school, or in occasional addresses before business men's gatherings, or in his literary work. Ministers often wonder why it is that sermons of past time pulpit giants, like Luther, Zwingli, Knox and others, had such a mighty effect on millions of men, while when read today they leave one unmoved. The secret is that those sermons were "timely", based on and colored by the actual conditions of the times, while modern preaching is to a large extent tame, theoretical, abstract, uninformed and not fitted to the times ("weltfremd").

Seven. Knowledge of the social sciences will also make the minister a *better pastor, adviser and leader* of his people and of society in general. Millions of the American people, especially of the educated and the laboring classes, are well informed on the various sociological theories. Already in our church membership, there are many kinds of social attitudes represented, and their number is on the increase. Now a minister cannot afford to make a laughing stock of himself and cast discredit on the cause of Christ and his Church and drive thousands away from her courts, by blind and bitter denunciation of the modern sciences and the social movements. Even when a minister favors standpattism on the social problems he should be able to defend his reactionism with intelligence.

Eighth. A knowledge of the social sciences will also make the minister a *better theologian* by enabling him to make the necessary and proper theological adjustments on the basis of new facts, clearer beliefs, stronger convictions and experiences and truer interpretations of the Bible. The essence of saving faith which is trust in God, is a matter of the heart and has remained the same in all ages, but theology is a matter of man's intellect, a feeble attempt to interpret the facts of the Bible and of Christian experience on the basis of the knowledge and spirit of the times. Like all other sciences, theology is therefore subject to constant changes and

necessary adjustments. There will therefore always be a new theology of the old faith. In this sense, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, the Reformers, Wesley, Schleiermacher and others were all new theologians, making new theological adjustments. The same work is quietly but effectively going on at present. Walter Rauschenbusch, in his last book, "A Theology for the Social Gospel," says "We have a social gospel. We need a systematic theology large enough to match it and vital enough to back it. If theology stops growing or is unable to adjust itself to its modern environment and to meet its present tasks, it will die. Many now regard it as dead. The social gospel needs a theology to make it effective; but theology needs the social gospel to vitalize it, for it is a permanent addition, to our spiritual outlook and its arrival constitutes a stage in the development of the Christian religion." Knowledge of the social sciences will assist the minister to make these theological adjustments intelligently.

Nine. Knowledge of the modern social sciences and of the actualities of modern life will also enable an increasing number of well trained ministers to take a direct hand in bringing about concrete reforms. The captains of industry and some labor leaders often object to the social declarations of the church on the plea that the church is not competent to discuss economic and industrial questions. Unfortunately, there is much truth in this, and our seminary boards and faculties should make a note of it; but in its generalization the charge is not true. There have always been and there are today thousands of ministers who know what they are talking and writing about on political and economic questions. Yea, owing to their better trained minds and their wide reading and observation, some ministers know much better what at bottom is ailing society than many "practical" business men. History and recent facts, such as the famous report on the Steel Trust, prove this contention. Hence, while as a rule, it will not be the task of the minister to tell his people how to run their business, it may often become desirable, if not necessary, that the minister should have something positive to teach touching the well-being of society. The inculcation of general principles may not always be enough. Instance the case of Nathan before David. It becomes necessary for the preacher sometimes to say, "Thou art the man." The command, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" sometimes needs more explicit explanation, as it did once, at least, in the history of Christ. But in order to give such explanation a good deal of ethical and especially sociological knowledge is required.

THE BENEDICTION, A BLESSING OR A PRAYER?

Professor John O. Evjen, Ph.D.

II

Apostolic Benedictions

We now come to a class of benedictions called Apostolic, embracing what is sometimes called the *Salve, Vale, Votum, Pax,* etc., generally greetings taken from the letters in the New Testament, verbatim or with slight modifications. In making the transition from the treatment of the Mosaic or Aaronic Benediction to the so-called Apostolic, it may be well to quote from Lyman Coleman's *The Apostolical and Primitive Church* (1844). The author defines the sacerdotal benediction as a brief prayer to God for his blessings upon the people by one who has been duly set apart to the service of the ministry, as an intercessor with God in their behalf. Perhaps Coleman stresses the intercessory factor too much, but he is right in saying that the intercession was the exclusive act of the "clergy". In commenting on more modern usage, especially the usage in the Lutheran Church, where, in his opinion, only the ordained clergyman is authorized to perform the rite, saying "The Lord bless you" etc., instead of "The Lord bless us," as the layman is expected to say, Coleman mistakingly deduces just what some Lutherans themselves deduce—that the minister, according to Lutheran thinking, stands in the place of Christ to bless the people in his name. Coleman thus makes Catholics and Lutherans, alike, the adherents of a "delusive dogma" which has changed the character of the Christian Ministry. He is, indeed, right in censuring the hierarchic development of the ministry, but he is too much a follower of the letter to be able to interpret the Aaronic benediction wholly in an evangelical way. He is therefore happy to make the claim that there are no indications of the use of sacerdotal benedictions, in the Jewish and prelatic sense of the term, in the religious worship of the Churches (p. 416). He asks, with some reason, "Was it not the superintending providence of God which graciously withheld the Apostles and primitive Christians from adopting a rite, rendered obsolete by the atoning work of the High Priest of our profession and susceptible of unutterable abuses, as the subsequent history of the church clearly shows?"

Commenting on the Apostolic benediction, he says, it is in spirit and in import altogether unlike the Aaronic benediction *of the Jews* or the *prelatic blessing* of the bishop and priest. It is, he says, nothing more than a brief *prayer,* a benevolent desire offered with solemnity unto God for his blessing upon the people. Coleman

is right in making this distinction between the two, provided the Aaronic blessing is given, received, and understood with the limitation imposed upon the Old Testament. But he fails to see what Reinhold Seeberg has noted, that to the liberated Christian the entire Bible is gospel, and to the legalist, the entire Bible is law. Therefore, it escapes him, that the Aaronic benediction, though occasioning abuse and misunderstanding, through its literal rendition in the assembly of public worship, can be interpreted and can be used spiritually, in the way Luther intended it to be used, when he introduced it into the Reformation liturgy.*

Wishes of Prayer, Wishes for Blessings

It is not necessary, in this treatise, to list all of the apostolic benedictions. It is sufficient to consider those that are more or less in common usage today, with references to other Scripture passages which aid in explaining them.

We shall first consider Phil. 4: 7, called the Vale, or Pax (English: the Peace), often read at the conclusion of the sermon in some churches; and often at the conclusion of the entire service, in other churches. We repeat what has been said before, that the

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* Luther, making Numbers 6, 24 seq. a part of the Liturgy, certainly had no intention of reviving the Old testament priesthood. He was not any more hesitant about laying a deeper spiritual meaning into this formulary than was St. John in using the logos concept, which the Apostle found, but greatly modified. This free attitude of Luther is noted especially in his explanation of the commandments in the Small Catechism. In explaining the fourth commandment (Honor thy father and thy mother, etc., the fifth commandment according to the Reformed), he embraced the whole field of social ethics. In explaining the third commandment (fourth, Reformed), to keep the sabbath, he says nothing about the Sabbath of twenty-four hours. He takes the commandment to mean, in its spiritual interpretation, that our entire life should be "Sabbath." Our fear and love of God, which is religion, should reveal themselves in such a way that we "do not despise his Word and the preaching (proclamation: whether by the mother, teaching her child about God, or the minister teaching a church, or, say both, living the Christian life as a preaching example) of the Gospel. This is the negative side. The positive side of keeping this commandment consists in deeming the gospel holy, by hearing and teaching it willingly.

The word used by Luther "leren" meant in his day to teach, as well as to learn. The Norwegian translation "laere" has the same twofold meaning. The Norwegian-Danish Epitome of the Catechism, by Pontoppidan (1737), as well as the Stavanger edition of 1896, translated "hear from others and teach others." This corresponds to the First Latin Translation of the Small Catechism, in 1529, *Enchiridion Piarum precationum: "libenter tum audire ab aliis tum alios docere."* The somewhat later Latin text of Sauromannus reads "discamus." This is quite natural, for it was a translation for school pupils. Reu, in "A new English Translation of Luther's Small Catechism," p. 23, prefers the interpretation "learn." However, Luther would hardly be satisfied with the mere passive function; he would also include active teaching, which need not always be public.

verse in question, as rendered in the Bible, is not a benediction, a wish or prayer, but a statement in the indicative: "The peace of God . . . *shall keep* your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Usage has made this reading common, "And now may the peace of God," etc. Likely it is due to the Latin rendering: *custodiat,* instead of custodiet, in the Vulgate.

According to the "Alterbog" (1902) of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in our country, the sermon concludes with the words of Paul: 2 Cor. 13, 14. This is prescribed in the Norwegian Liturgy, which calls 2 Cor. 13, 14 "det apostoliske Oenske"; that is, the Apostolic *wish:* "The work of the pulpit, we read, concludes with the apostolic wish, whereupon 2 Cor. 13, 14 is said by the pastor. The "work" in the pulpit comprises, beside the sermon, the general prayer and the Lord's Prayer. The Norwegian and Danish Lutheran churches, as a rule, have no lectern. They have most of their prayers read from the pulpit, while the collects and epistles are generally read from the altar.*

Before studying 2 Cor. 13, 14 more carefully, let us turn our attention to briefer, kindred forms.

In Romans 16, 20 we read, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you." The greatest New Testament scholar of our day, Th. Zahn, calls this a "Gebetswunsch." Professor S. Odland, his greatest pupil in Norway, calls it "Boenneoenske," both terms, literally translated, meaning a wish of prayer.

1 Cor. 16, 22 is classified by C. F. Georg Heinrici (Meyers Kommentar) together with Rom. 16: 20, 24; Gal. 6: 18; Phil. 4: 23; 1 Th. 5: 28; 2 Th. 3: 18 as the Apostle Paul's most current "Schlusswunsch" (Concluding wish). Odland calls is "Velsignelsesoenske" (wish of blessing).

G. Wohlenberg in the great Zahn Commentary, commenting on 1 Thess. 5: 28, makes a quite similar statement: "As the writers of the Epistle (Paul, Sylvanus, Timothy) began with a "Segenswunsch" (wish of blessing), they also closed with a "Wunschformel": as Paul does in all his epistles, except for a concluding doxology to Romans. The shorter ones are Col. 4: 18; 1 Tim. 6: 21; 2 Tim. 4: 22; Titus 3: 15. The longer ones are 1 Cor. 16: 23, 24; 2 Cor. 13: 14; Gal. 6: 18; Eph. 6: 23, 24; Phil. 4: 23.

Paul Ewald, in the Zahn Commentary, calls Col. 4: 18 "The

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* It is well for a congregation to see a face in prayer especially for circles that believe that the altar-ward prayer of the minister is a *religions necessity.* "Orientation" whether its origin is due to looking towards Jerusalem or towards the East, at public prayer, is an adiaphoron so long as it is not made a religious requirement. In thirteen ancient Catholic churches, in Rome, whose altars are on the west, the priest steps *behind* the altar and turns his face toward the congregation, towards the East. (Julius Böhner, Die Studierstube, Oct., 1922.)

grace be with you," a "Gebetswunsch." He calls Eph. 6: 23, Phil. 4: 23, Philemon 25 a "Schlusswunsch."

S. Odland calls Eph. 6: 23 "Velsignelsesoenske," and Rom. 1: 7 a "hilseoenske" (wish of greeting).

J. Chr. Petersen, or Norway, calls, Heb. 13: 22 ("The grace be with you all") a wish: Ivar Welle, also of Norway, finds that 1 Peter 5: 14 ("Peace be unto you all that are in Christ") is a wish. Likewise 3 John 15 and Jude 3.

In agreement with these German and Norwegian exegetes on the issue in question, are Danish and English exegetes like Skat Roerdam and Fr. Torm, both of Denmark, and W. Robertson Nicoll, of England. Roerdam calls, e. g. Rom. 16: 20 "velsignelsesoenske." Torm, commenting on 1 Tim. 6: 22, says: In place of the usual Greek epistolary greeting, Paul always concludes with a "Velsignelsesoenske," expressed by "Grace." Most often it reads, The grace of (our) Lord Jesus Christ. But in Collossians, Ephesians and the Pastoral letters we read "grace" without any added genitive. The Expository Greek Testament, by W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. III, 118-19, says: "He (Paul) always ends with a *prayer* that Christ's grace may rest on his correspondents."

In summary: All the authorities quoted, agree in calling the "apostolic benedictions" wishes or prayers. But the wish is the father of prayer. Even the custom of removing the hat when greeting "Good morning" is a testimony to the connection of prayer. I wish the person whom I greet, a good morning. It means, I pray that he may have a good morning. In praying, I remove my hat. The custom is better exemplified in European countries, where men when greeting, remove their hats for men as well as women. A later, but inadequate explanation of the origin of the custom harks back to the age of chivalry.

The most complete apostolic benediction is, however, 2 Cor. 13, 14, already in part dealt with. In the Norwegian liturgy, as it is seen, it is expressly called the apostolic wish. Odland and Bugge of Norway call it a *wish* for blessing, Weiss and Heinrici, of Germany call it "Segenswunsch." In most cases these benedictions have *no verb*. Hence the optative of *to be* is supplied. Schlatter is an exception, making the verb indicative: "The grace of our Lord . . . *is* with you." Even if Schlatters translation should be preferable, which it is not, the indicative form would signify a declaration. But no declaration works *ex opere operato*. There must be *boni interiores motus* present in the recipients.

Philologic Support

That blessing by man is a *wish or* prayer is clearly shown in philological research. In Preuschen-Bauer's splendid Gr.-Deutsches

Woerterbuch, the word for blessing—*evloge*—is treated at length. Its first meaning, to praise and give thanks, lists Mat. 14: 19 (thanks for fish and bread) : 21, 26 (praise and thanks for the bread of the Lord's Supper) ; Mark 6 : 41 (thanks for bread and fish) ; 14 : 22 (for the Lord's Supper). Luke 24 : 30 refers to giving thanks at meal. The Jewish housefather in saying grace (thanks) broke bread. 1 Cor. 14 : 16 is a prayer of thanks.

The second meaning of "evlogeo" is, blessing by wishing God's gracious power upon a person : Luke 24 : 50 ; Luke 1 : 28 ; Rom. 12 : 14a ; Heb. 11 : 21 ; 1 Cor. 4 : 12 ; 1 Pet. 3 : 9. "Evlogeo" is also used in the sense of wishing one propitiousness : Luke 2 : 34 ; Matt. 21 : 9 ; 23 : 39 ; Mark 11 : 9 ; Luke 13 : 25.

The third meaning is : To remember someone with benevolent deeds, God or Christ being the subject. Heb. 6 : 14 ; Eph. 1 : 3 ; Gal. 3 : 9 ; Acts 3 : 25 ; Luke 14 : 2 ; Eph. 2 : 1 ; Matt. 25, 34.

This dictionary also speaks of "blessing things," referring to Mark 8 : 7 ; Luke 9 : 16 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 16. The latter alleged meaning is not scriptural, and does not receive its support in the Jewish thinking of the day, which was legalistic, but really above the idea that a particular sanctity could be transferred to a thing by blessing. It does, however receive support in the Hellenistic-mystic thought of the day. But, were men like Paul trained in the law, and converted to the gospel of liberty, affected with the leaven of religious Hellenism? Hardly.

The summary of the second part of our treatise is this : Apostolic benedictions are wishes or prayers ; and "evlogeo," aside from the doxological application, generally means : to wish grace for somebody. Only God or Christ can bless in the real sense, though Christ himself often petitioned the Father for blessings upon somebody. No mortal, not even an Apostle, can do more than to pray for the blessing which God alone makes effective. Thus the position taken in the first part of this treatise, has been confirmed by the second part, clearly indicating the correctness of Dr. Thuemmel, of Jena,* who well says :

"No priesthood has a monopoly. God alone blesses by imparting his spiritual power. The blessing by man is only a prayer to God in behalf of others. A Christian *blessing* is always a *prayer.*"

III

Consecration, or the Benediction of Things

There is a third kind of benediction, the blessing of things. What does it mean? Mark 8 : 7 speaks of Christ's blessing the fish at the feeding of the Four Thousand. But the marginal reading "excharistesas" would indicate that Christ gave thanks, or said

* R.G.G., Handlungen, christliche II, p. 1841.

grace. B. Weiss translates: gave prayer of praise. Luke 9: 16 is taken by Bauer to mean "consecrate"; this is possible only when a concession is made to the influence of Hellenistic-mystic thought. Zahn, strong in Patristic Greek, says, Christ used a prayer of "thanks."

But what does "evlogeo" mean in the passage, "The cup of blessing which we bless?" (1 Cor. 10: 16). Did Christ consecrate the cup, or its contents, so as to give to it a power or attribute which it did not possess before? The explanation of this verse by Heinrici (Meyer Kommentar v. 304 seq.) and by Ph. Bachmann (Zahn Kommentar Vii) is too scholastic, and too much under the spell of the "How" at the Colloquy at Marburg of 1529, since the "What" is the all important thing; perfect fellowship with the entire person (soma) of Christ. Illuminating is the explanation by A. Schlatter: "The Church of Corinth indeed has no altar and performs no act of sacrifice at its gathering for worship. But it needs, in its gatherings, the cup of blessing, which is called thus because the praise of God has been said over it, and because it is filled and is drunk in order that God be praised. After it has been filled with wine, we bless it, says Paul. It is expressly designated as a gift of God, who bestows his grace on the congregation that it might praise him." **

This explanation, entirely scriptural, is as far removed from the idea of a mystery cult as it is from the scholasticism of an Occam. It harmonizes with the fact that "evlogeo" *** in the language of the New Testament can not be interpreted as "dinglich." One of the greatest Protestant theologians, Karl Heim, of our day speaks with tremendous earnestness against the "dingliche", the popular-vulgar magic of the Roman Catholic Church, with its cult of hierarchic benediction and consecration.

The Catholic View

Heim attacks the two pillars on which the entire edifice of Rome's vulgar superstitious magic rests: first, the consecrated priest; secondly the sacred room, the sacred act and the sacred object.

As to the priest, he says, the Catholic believes that plenary powers of a religious nature can be transferred to a human being, through "dingliche" means, like the Chrisma of the bishop; and through acts of anointing and consecrating. The naive Catholic believes that the benediction received from a Catholic priest, just consecrated, is most powerful. It is as if he were surcharged with celestial electricity; the naive Catholic has faith in the popular

**Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament II, 262.

*** Our word "eulogy" is derived from this Greek word.

saying that one ought to ride a horse to death in order to receive the first blessing of a newly consecrated priest. A freshly consecrated priest coming to his home is received as a superterrestrial being.

Against this massive superstition, Heim asserts that a pastor has no religious plenary authority, which all other living members of the church can not have. The official ministry, indeed, is needed: though not for religious reasons, but for the sake of a division of the work. It is a ministry without a super-earthly nimbus.

As to the sacred room, act, and object, Heim continues: The Protestant conception of the church teaches that God is no longer localizable, is no more spacially transcendent, but is transcendent in that deeper meaning, which reveals him only to a frightened conscience. Therefore, there is no longer in existence a sacred room, a sacred place where God is more present than at any other place.

There exist no longer any sacred objects which could be charged with such powers of grace that they would bring me closer to God by touching them, kissing them, or eating them as medicine.

There are, therefore, no more any sacred acts, which can be performed with these sacred objects and can mediate to me, *ex opere operato,* powers of grace.

To sum it up, "this entire conception belongs to the Pre-Copernican age of religion."

Applying this, Heim finds that Luther, in his contention at Marburg, departed from his spiritual conception as applied to the other sacrament, by advancing the dangerous statement that also unbelievers, in the elements of the Lord's Supper, receive the body and blood of Christ, though to their judgment. As soon as it is even conceivable, says Heim, that a human being, without belief in the Word, receive a heavenly food, we again have the sacred object, the consecrated host, charged with super-earthly forces. One can then come in contact with the heavenly powers in another way than solely by the conscience under the impression of the Word—namely by eating a host. Thus far Heim.

This is good Paulinism, and in agreement with Schlatter's explanation of the cup of blessing it brings out, forcibly and scripturally, that we cannot bless objects or consecrate persons so as to transfer to them a certain sacred quality.

The Meaning of "Consecration"

We do nevertheless speak also in the evangelical Church of blessing objects. But, as E. Chr. Achelis says, this blessing is to be understood in a twofold meaning:

"First, this benediction is the separation of the object from its

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* Karl Heim, Das Wesen des evangelischen Christentums, 1926.

common use, for an exclusively cultic use by the Church. It is always connected with the first employment of it at a gathering for public worship. As long as this use of the object continue, the objects, so used, are *res sacrae*. As soon as the cultic use ceases, they are no longer termed *res sacrae*. They are not desecrated or profaned, if they are withdrawn from use at worship and are returned to ordinary use. One may speak of desecration and profanation only when these objects, set aside for divine worship, are used in a frivolous way for acts devoid of the worshipful.

"Secondly, the benediction of objects take place, without exception, *by metonomy*. The objects are mentioned, but the persons using them are meant. This moment becomes very prominent in the Evangelical forms of consecration. For example, the consecration of a *cemetery* is not intended (as ancients believed) to keep away the demons from the graves, but it is a solemn act whereby the field is taken in use as a cemetery and given over to the living that they piously protect it. A cemetery is not desecrated by ceasing to be used as a cemetery, and, later, by being put to another use. It is desecrated (figuratively spoken) when it is used impiously, e. g. as a grazing field. The same holds true of the consecration of church edifices, of *vasa sacra, etc.* The objects do not receive a supernatural power, which distinguishes them from other objects, or vessels. The benediction really means that the objects are put to use in worship."*

The Catholics regard consecration as a higher degree of benediction. Luther, as is well known, rejected very decisively benedictions and consecrations applied to inanimate objects; as did also, in express terms, the Church order of Braunschweig (1528) of Goettingen (1530), of Soest (1532), of Nassau (1536) of Kurbrandenburg (1540), of Kalenberg (1542), and of Pfalzneuberg (1543).

G. Rietschel expresses himself in much the same way as Achelis. It is evangelical, especially Lutheran teaching that "consecration *never has operative influence* on the consecrated object. It does not impart to the objects supernatural power and sanctity . . . The consecrated objects remain entirely unchanged in their natural quality." Rietschel prefers the word "dedicate," which means: to give up *as to* sacred or serious use, while consecrate means to set apart as *itself sacred*.

Verba Testamenti

Rietschel, in a true evangelical spirit, also rejects the widespread belief that the words of Institution (verba testamenti) said over the elements of the Lord's Supper have the power to effect a unio sacramentalis. He criticizes this conception as unevangelical and Romanizing. In 1521 or 1522 Luther rejected the blessing of the elements by the priest and ascribed to the words of Institution the character of a proclamation of the Gospel. The minister, he said, should turn to the people, not to the altar, while reading the words of Institution. He should not whisper or mumble them as if they produced a magical effect, but sing or say them aloud that the congregation might hear that the Lord's Supper and what it implies is "for you," for the repentant people in the congregation.

A prayer at the Lord's Supper is of course not to be rejected.

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* Achelis, Lehrbuch der praktischen Theologie, 3rd ed., I, 512. Compare also Achelis, Benediktionen in Herzog-Hauck P. R. E. II; also his abbreviated summary in the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, II, 49.

The name "eucharist" implies that the Lord's Supper was accompanied by much prayer and praise. But the nature of such prayer would be much like that of a prayer said at meat. Saying grace (gratiam) at the table, means to give thanks, but the table prayer is not *applied* to the food. It is a thanksgiving and a petition to God that he will cause the food to be for our blessing. The table prayer "Bless us and these thy gifts," in Luther's Catechism, is a prayer *super elementis* but not *super elementa*. The Formula of Concord correctly, but perhaps unconsciously, states that the reciting of the words of Institution takes place *"super pane et vino."* The words are not applied to the elements themselves, which, if they were, would be expressed *"super panem et vinum"*** Rietchel quotes Th. Harnack as rejecting the postconsecration of elements as "an echo of the Roman practice, which early awakened the idea of a magic effect of the Word."† The chief thing about the Lord's supper is the gospel proclamation, not a consecration.

Dedicating a Church Edifice

As to consecrating, or rather, dedicating churches, Luther's sermon, 1544, the first held in a newly built chapel in Torgau, is a model of evangelical thinking. He chose as his text, Luke 14: 1-14, which refers to keeping the Sabbath holy, and he said: "What does it really mean to keep a day, an hour, or a week sacred? First, to do something so as to accomplish some thing sacred—above all to proclaim God's Word in purity and holiness. Secondly, to do something in order that others may hear the Word of God, learn it and so help that it be proclaimed and preserved in purity. That is the right way of keeping a day of celebration holy, to consecrate the place or church, as we are consecrating this house.

Not a ceremony, but "putting the shoulders together" . . . and "therewith to bless and consecrate ourselves and others," is the right kind of church dedication. Then the church will be a blessing for many." The church edifice does not receive a supernatural divine power by being consecrated any more, than a cem-

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** G. Rietschel, Lehrbuch der Liturgik II, 546.

M. Schian, Grundriss der Praktischen Theologie, p. 66: "The recitation of verba testamenti does not mean 'consecration'. This concept is antagonistic to evangelical thinking."

The Homberg Church ordinance, 1526, prohibited, what it called, the *superstitiosae benedictiones* of bread, wine, water, salt, etc., and recommended in its place a table prayer, but not as compulsory. A. L. Richter, Die Evang. Kirchenordnungen (1846) p. 61.

To the point are the statements of *Franz Rendtorff*. Die *Geschichte des christlichen Gottesdienstes* (1914) p. 47. This work is a classic on the history of Liturgics. Very fine is also Fr. Flemming, *Die treibenden Kraefte in der lutherischen Gottesdienstreform* (1926).

† Rietschel, Lehrbuch II, 549. Achelis, Lehrbuch der Praktischen Theologie I, 443.

etery. The opposite, catholic, view is unable to comprehend that, what God has created, is, without anything further, also suitable for use in public worship. Luther, indeed, spoke of a consecration of what has been created, through Word and prayer, but he added: From this the objects created receive no new power, but are confirmed in their previous power. ††

What applies to blessings here, also applies to the blessings or benedictions of marriages, or to the ordination of ministers. To Luther both acts were acts of prayer.* This treatise would be entirely too long, if it should add a detailed discussion of these acts to what has already been presented.

Benefits

But, the reader may ask, Does one then derive nothing from benedictions? Yes, but not *ex opere operato*. Benedictions are the Word of God, whether they be prayed or sung. As the hearing of any Word of God can bring blessings, so the hearing of a benediction may be elevating and bring much comfort. But, again, not *ex opere operato*. Moreover, the benedictions are not a higher kind of Word, an especially sacred utterance, said by a specially sacred man in a specially sacred place; nor are they a lower kind of Word of God. But they are to be used as all other Word of God, not as a relic of the thinking that demanded exorcism, nor as the remnant of still lower conception, for example of that of the king of Moab, who wanted blesses and curses made according to order. No hierarch can curse, no hierarch can bless.

There is, after all, "an actual fulfilment of the consecration, which is a prayer." It takes place, first, in order that many human beings may derive spiritual blessings from, and in the object consecrated. The place into which a good man enters, is "consecrated." But places and churches can not be holy, and cannot bless . . . Churches can not be consecrated, in the real sense. We can only pray for the persons who come to it to teach and to be taught, to sing and pray and listen.

Calvin in discussing churches, or what he often called temples, said: "There is need of great caution, lest we either consider them as the proper habitations of the Deity, where he may be nearer to us to hear our prayers,—an idea which has begun to be prevalent for ages, several ages—or ascribe to them I know not what mysterious

†† Luther's Werke. (E. A.) 25,378. Schian, Praktische Theologie, 192.

* In 1921 when the Lutheran bishop of Reval was consecrated, Archbishop N. Soederblom spoke as follows: When we blessingly lay our hands on your head, it means that honest hearts in Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, and Germany, as we here in your dear country Esthonia *offer ardent intercession* for you and the church of Christ which you have been solemnly asked to serve. Kyrkohistorisk Arsskrift, 1922, p. 332.

sanctity, which might be supposed to render our devotions more holy in the Divine view. For, since we are ourselves true temples of God, we must pray with ourselves, if we wish to invoke him in his holy temple. But let us, who are directed to worship the Lord "in spirit and in truth," without any difference of place, relinquish those gross ideas of religion to the Jews or pagans. There was, indeed, anciently a temple dedicated, by Divine command, to the oblation of prayers and sacrifices: at that time the truth was figuratively concealed under such shadows. But now having been plainly discovered to us, it no longer permits an exclusive attachment to any material temple. Nor, indeed, was the temple recommended to the Jews that they might enclose the Divine presence within its walls, but that thy might be employed in contemplating a representation of the true temple. Therefore Isaiah and Stephen have sharply reprehended those who suppose that God dwells in any respect "in temples made with hands."**

This attitude is that of Luther also. But Lutheran evangelical circles, having, from the start, a generous appreciation of the natural expressions of life, as shown in the free composition of the hymn over against the paraphrased psalm; of the New Testament themes of a composer like J. S. Bach over against the martial Old Testament themes of Haendel; of the love of that art which dares make likenesses also of things "that are in heaven above and of things that are in the earth beneath," number millions of "plain folks" who are devoted to church customs, which many others would pity or mock. But these customs they do not regard as *opus operatum*. The peasant cannot always express in words his religious experience. He therefore understands the visible word better than the clear speech of the theological, more immediately than does the trained and reflective mind. At the tolling of the evening bell, he hears the sound of peace and prayer. For him custom is a religious language. Hence, as is often seen in Europe, the handkerchief delicately folded around the hymnal, hence the quiet visits to the graves around the church, hence a courtesy before this or that object in church, the stealthy tear at confirmation, the signing of the cross on forehead, breast,—and, not to forget, the benediction.

But this evangelical peasant does not do his thinking *per opus operatum,* and he has not surrendered the belief in the general priesthood of believers. Not he, but his "consecrated" brother, even in modern schools of prophets, may get his ideas crossed and experience a relapse that makes the words of the Danish Church historian J. Oskar Anderson sound utterly strange to him; "Consecrations do not transmit to objects peculiar powers or virtues. Their sacredness depends on their use."

It is often difficult for such a mind to react favorably to the clear-cut evangelical statement made about sacramentals by the well-known statesman and jurist Richard W. Dove (d 1907):

** Thuemmel, Art. Handlungen, Christliche, R. G. G. II, 1841; Calvin, Institutes, translation by John Allen II, p. 116; (Book III, Chapter xx, section 30).

"The evangelical church knows no sacramentals. It employs neither consecration nor benediction even for the immediate instruments of divine worship such as would impart to them any property of sanctity. But according to Church law these objects deserve special respect and are specially protected against abuse. A solemn *dedication* is usual for churches and cemeteries, by means of a *prayer of benediction* . . . As to the setting-apart of particular objects (pulpits, *vasa sacra*, organs, baptismal font), it was held sufficient by a Conference of representatives of the evangelical-Lutheran Church government, 1856, that the local clergyman, on the first occasion of the use of the object in question address a few appropriate words to the congregation, and then ask God's blessing upon the employment of the object.

"In regard to the benedictions for objects of every day use, the older Protestant ordinances declared expressly against them on account of the danger of superstition."*

The reason for this difficulty of comprehension is due to sub-evangelical conceptions of the universal priesthood and to exalted views of priest, ceremony, and dogma.

A minister, or priest, in whatever capacity he functions, "can be for another man facing eternity nothing more than a brotherly *counselor* and *fatherly interceding friend*. He can not influence his eternal fate through the pronouncing of sacred formulas and through sacramental acts." These words, of Karl Heim, one of the most prominent systematicians of our age, apply not only to the Roman priest; for the priest is also found in Protestant circles. The priest in many Protestant sects has a still more dangerous power than in the Roman Church . . . Protestantism is the only religious form in the history of the world that no longer needs the priest, pontifex, to bridge the way between God and the soul.**

As the interceding friend and the counselling brother, the minister becomes something else than a master of ceremonies. Ceremonies have their place; and Saint Augustine has said: Without external ceremonies it is impossible to serve religion (Libr. ix contra Faustum). But, be it noted, here ceremonies are not made identical with religion itself, but are regarded as a more or less necessary means for keeping up public worship. "A certain man has said, 'Religion itself begins just exactly where ceremonies cease.' To reach the goal, certain means are necessary; they must, however, not be confused with the goal. But this, only too often takes place among people, not alone in the papacy, but in the evangelical Church. It is the mistake of the ministry, when it neglects to lead the church to a reasonable service, which, because of abuse, need not be deprived of necessary means."*

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* Dove, Article, Sakramentalien, Herzog-Hauck, P.R.E., 17, 391.

** Heim, Das Wesen des evangelischen Christentums, 94 seq.

*Erich Pontoppidan, Collegium Pastorale Practicum, writen 1757. Ed. 1850, 464.

Religion is fellowship with God, not ceremonies, which, being of various kinds, may indirectly help or injure the cause of religion. For this reason, also the dogma of technical theology may aid or harm. The dogma has its place. But it is wrong to make it a part of Revelation, as a sponsor of hierarchy or supporter of mystagogy. One of the greatest church historians of modern times, H. Boehmer —in criticising Erik Petersens view that the incarnation of the logos is continued in the sacraments and the speaking of the logos in dogma, denies Petersen's contention that the ultimate character of Revelation is expressed in dogma, and that faith is submission to dogma. Boehmer's answer is, that, according to the evangelical view, dogma is not a part of Revelation, but only an endeavor, conditioned by the times, to establish and confirm the right understanding of Revelation. The object of Revelation, as also Luther says, is not dogma, but revelation, or better, God, who has been revealed in Revelation.*

The minister, the dogma, the ceremony, the Word itself and the response of the people: all this appears in public and private worship. We sometimes call this worship service. But our Sunday service is not *our* service of God. It is his service of us. God serves us, gives us the Gospel, which is proclaimed to us and by us, in preaching and reading, song and prayer. All this is for us. To call this a sacrifice to God is not evangelical, says M. Schian. The congregation does not pray in order to sacrifice to God, but in order to be edified in fellowship with God.**

The division of the "service" into the sacrificial (we come to God) and the sacramental (He comes to us) is confusing. Worship is conversation with God, in which He imparts to us and we receive, with praise and thanks. Christianity's outstanding characteristic is to receive what God gives. And thus, at the close of every service, we receive what we always receive from God in the field of nature, of history, and of individuality: through creation, redemption, and sanctification.

In other words, we receive, if we are willing to receive, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

We pray for this blessing upon ourselves and others. But God alone blesses.

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* H. Boehmer, Gesammelte Aufsaetze, 276.

** M. Schian, Die Reform des Gottesdienstes und die hochkirchliche Bewegung, 1922, 18.

Karl Eger, in Evangelischen Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst (1924): "Worship does not exist for God's sake, but for the sake of *man*, that something be imparted to him by God."

OUR CONFESSION

By A. A. Susott

In 1840 the German Evangelical Church Union of the West, to which our Evangelical Synod traces its origin, was organized. Since the organizers themselves, and the people they ministered to, were of German origin, the object of the Association readily defined itself as the care of German immigrants. Immigration at that time was at its height, and those coming into a strange new land, among strange people, needed the help, the encouragement, and the checks, of the church. As the association of churches grew, its purpose remained the same, for there were the immigrants themselves, and there were their many children to be ministered to in a language they could understand. The German Evangelical Synod, as it came to be called, thus filled a very real need in the history of our country. It was bound to the Evangelical church of Germany with the close ties of history and blood relationship. Its confession too was the same. Our Church is thus a very natural growth. The existing need was seen, and so far as possible, met.

When the shadows of the great war were upon us, immigration from Germany naturally ceased. The gradual process of changing from the German to the English language was hastened, and the church as such lost a great measure of its importance, through lack of readjustment. Immigration has never again become important, nor will it ever become a factor that needs to be seriously reckoned with on the part of the Evangelical Synod. Our country is no longer the land of unlimited opportunity it once was, restricted immigration will henceforth always be with us; and the proportion of our own people is so large that those coming in can very readily be assimilated. Today we seem to be without any distinct objective, and we are earnestly seeking a field in which we will be able to make a distinct contribution to American church life. Unless we find such a cause, to which the Synod can give itself heart and soul, the church will die of inanition.

In what particular way shall our Synod spend itself in service? Certain talents it has received from the Lord of the Church—what use will it make of its gifts? Certainly it has been instrumental in helping to bring about a realization of the need of Religious Education. It has made a very real contribution in this particular field. Today, however, we are failing dismally to adjust ourselves to changed and changing conditions, and our program of religious education has become antiquated. It is certainly inadequate to meet the needs of our people today. Our catechism is in great need of satisfactory revision. It contains not only actual errors of teach-

ing, but fails to emphasize certain important truths, such as social service. We may, and it seems to me we should, reassume our place in the field of religious education. Here again, the vital lack of an all-embracing purpose makes itself felt. Our whole work is suffering because of this lack of objective. We still find many churches interpreting their task as teaching to read and write the German language. The church dare not deviate from the one essential—to teach the Word of God. Many of our older people, to whom German is the mother tongue, the natural mode of expression, still need to have German preached to them, and need to hear the vital truths of Christianity in their language. But to impose it upon our younger people in the name of religion is little short of sacrilege.

Realizing the lack that is upon us, many of our prominent ministers and a few of our laymen are urging a union with some other church body. The trouble is interpreted as being one of comparative size. Because we are small; that is why we are not in a position to make a contribution. Yet other church bodies, some of them large, are also failing. It is not merely a matter of size—I question whether it is a matter of size at all. Given the right kind of a contribution and we are sure to grow. No question will be solved by merging with any other body—it will perhaps defer the evil day, but the end will still be in sight. It is better to be honest, to face the question squarely, than to try to avoid the issue. The only thing that is carrying us on today is the previous impulse—and we are feeling its power ebb. What we need is a new impulse, and such an impulse can come only with the adoption of an adequate goal.

Loyalty of men to one another derives its vitality from the value of the common aim. It is this common aim which our own denomination is in danger of losing. Many different pet theories are being advanced, but there is a very real lack of that unity of the spirit which should be the characteristic of our church. We could undoubtedly merge with the Reformed Church, or with the Lutheran Church. We would thus lose our identity, which, under present conditions, would scarcely seem a loss. And yet it would be a loss, not only to ourselves but to the church at large. For it would mean that we would give up our motto of the unity of the spirit in order to have a corporate union with some other church body. Only a measure of modesty restrains me from saying, some other inferior church body. For, while we today are undoubtedly inferior to many denominations, our ideals are actually of the highest, and it would be a step backward if we were to unite with any body which holds only a portion of the accepted truth. It is necessary and inadvisable for our Synod to take a step which would be

an actual retrogression. When we move, let us move forward, not backward.

One of the greatest contributions that some church is going to make in the near future, is a confession which ignores the opinions and traditions of men, and centers again in Christ. I would to God that our own church might have the vision and the courage to make that contribution. It sometimes seems to me that we have been called into being for that very purpose, that God intends for us to make that vital confession which reaffirms the teaching of the Apostles to the exclusion of all else—believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. I venture to say that a majority of the pastors of our Synod today are unfamiliar with either Luther's or the Heidelberg Catechism, and have only a vague acquaintance with the Augsburg Confession. The people of our Synod are even farther from a knowledge of these books than are the pastors. To be worthwhile, a confession ought to be understood by the average man and woman within the church. As it is, most church confessions are a sort of smoke screen which effectively mystifies not only a large number of the clergy, but blinds a large number of the laity as well.

Our present confession is wholly inadequate to our needs. It does not embody our principle of unity of the spirit. It does not stress the importance of Holy Scriptures, placing the emphasis rather upon the interpretations of them as they are found in the Lutheran and Reformed church bodies. The only reference we are to make to them as the foundation of all we believe and hope is in regard to the point in dispute. Our confession has no present significance. There was a time when in contrast to the spirit of contention such a confession did indeed have a very real importance. Church history has left that time far behind, and we are not so in much in need of a settlement of some dogmatic problem as we are in need of a vital confession of our faith and hope. Actually, we subject ourselves to the limitations and the criticisms of the Lutheran and Reformed church bodies, without benefitting by their advantages. Why should we, as a strictly American product, bind ourselves to a confession of faith which is meaningless to most of our people and very hazy to many of our ministers? What is there holy in the traditions of men that makes it impossible to restate the truth with special reference to the needs of today? Surely, if Christ were here today, he would take us away from the traditions of men and lead us back to the simple Word.

We should develop our own confession. We stand alone. We are not a branch of some other denomination. We are one of the few really independent church bodies in America today. We are

a natural growth. When the time comes for us to take a step forward we may do so without consulting other affiliated bodies. We have no past achievements that bind us to that past. Certainly we have achievements, but these spur us on, rather than inviting us to rest. Our one time duty has been taken from us by force of circumstances, and another is needed to take its place. The duty was well done—but we cannot rest upon the past, we need to look forward to the future. We have today an important, double duty —to meet the present and future needs of our people. And as our forefathers, the founders of our church body, saw a distinct need and met it courageously, so we of today should see the need and meet it with the same foresight, the same vision, the same courage, as did those who were responsible for the founding of our Synod.

I have been asked to discuss the Confession of our Synod. This I seek to do, not by an analysis of our present Confession, but by the attempt to show what we believe and how that belief might be effectively stated. What should a Confession include? The one I have in mind would emphasize the following points. First, a recognition of the reliability, sufficiency, and authority of the Holy Scriptures. Second, an acceptance of the Fatherhood of God. Third, a dependence upon Jesus as "The Way, the Truth, and the Life," without whom none can come to the Father; and a realization that the experience of Jesus is essential to Christian living. Fourth, an absolute reliance upon the Holy Spirit as the Teacher and the source of Power in the Church, and in the individual Christian life.

In regard to the first of these: a recognition of the reliability, sufficiency and authority of the Holy Scriptures, it seems to me that this says all that needs to be said about the matter. That the Holy Scriptures are reliable is undisputed today by anyone who has made a careful study of honest Bible Criticism. There is very little doubt attaching to the validity of the scriptures being what they pretend to be—the Revelation of God to his people. That they are sufficient is a matter of personal experience. If we live by their teaching, we discover that they are adequate to the purpose of helping men find God, and of inspiring to better living. All worthwhile devotional literature has its origin in the Scriptures. There might be some objection to the last, the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Yet I would feel it essential to our Confession. We need something to cling to and something to build on, there must be authority somewhere for the church and the individual Christian conscience—and where shall we find it if we reject the Holy Scriptures? I therefore submit the following in regard to this first part: "The Evangelical Synod of North America recognizes and

accepts the reliability, sufficiency, and authority of the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible guide to Christian faith and life."

The second of these should stand without argument. God is the source of all life, and in that sense, he is the Father of all. It is true that many of the human race deny or reject that Fatherhood. While God is indeed the Father of all, not all men are his children. As Jesus himself says when he rebukes the Pharisees—"Ye are of your Father the devil." At the same time, God stands as a Father with open arms, not only waiting, but urging all his children to come to him. His heart goes out with a Father's love, even though many are unresponsive. In recognizing God as the Father of all, we would naturally recognize our obligation to our fellowmen, it would make social service, mission work, and all forms of service to our fellowmen of any race, color or creed, a brotherly duty. We therefore suggest the following: "The Evangelical Synod of North America acknowledges the universal Fatherhood of God, and prayerfully assumes those duties which arise out of this fact."

Probably the third point of the confession would be most open to argument, and from two sides. The one would say that our confession says too little leaving too much room for explanation and definition, which might weaken the paragraph, and the other that it says too much, not allowing the freedom which should prevail in the Evangelical Church. Personally, it seems to me to strike the balance pretty evenly: A dependence upon Jesus, the Son of God, as the way, the truth, and the life, without whom none can come to the Father; and a realization that the experience of Jesus is essential to Christian living. I have purposely refrained from further definition of what is meant by "Son of God." To me is self-evident that he was born in accordance with the story of Matthew and Luke, and as John intimates in his first chapter, and as it seems to me that Mark emphasizes by his insistence upon His Glory. At the same time, it is not for me to deny the possibility of Christian life and experience to one who might have difficulties with the Virgin birth. That he is the Son of God is the essential thought. We would need to recognize his own claim to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, especially so since it has been proven that there is no other way. Dr. E. Stanley Jones in his book "Christ at the Round Table," brings that fact out very clearly and forcibly. And as regards the last we are learning, almost too late it sometimes seems to me—that all writing, all instruction, all evidence is in vain unless there be the personal experience of Jesus Christ. Just what form that experience will take in the individual life is not certain, for Jesus is as endless in the variety of his manifestations as is the individual; that there will need to be a real, vital experience of the

Christ before there can be Christian living is sure. We might seek to express this thought in this way: "The Evangelical Synod of North America realizes its dependence upon Jesus, the Son of God, as the Way to the Father, as the Key to all Truth, and as the source of a redeemed Life. It sees in the personal experience of Jesus the only possible motive and power to Christian living."

Fourth, an absolute reliance upon the Holy Spirit as the Teacher and the source of Power in the Church, and in the individual Christian life. It is this Holy Spirit which reveals Jesus to us. A personal experience of Jesus is dependent upon the action of the Holy Spirit within us. It is this third person in the Holy Trinity who tears aside the veil of the material giving us the spiritual capacity that enables us to see Jesus, and God in Jesus. He it is that transforms the life, by enabling us to realize the constant presence of Jesus in our midst. We could perhaps use this as our confession: "The Evangelical Synod of North America relies absolutely upon the working of the Holy Spirit in the individual and in the church, to produce Christian life. It depends upon him as Teacher, Counsellor, and Guide."

The entire confession of faith would then be as follows: "The Evangelical Synod of North America recognizes and accepts the reliability, sufficiency, and authority of the Holy Scriptures, as the only infallible guide to Christian faith and life. It acknowledges the universal Fatherhood of God, and prayerfully assumes those duties which arise out of this fact. It realizes its dependence upon Jesus, the Son of God, as the Way to the Father, as the Key to all Truth, and as the source of the Redeemed Life. It sees in the personal experience of Jesus the only possible motive and power to Christian living. It relies absolutely upon the working of the Holy Spirit in the individual and in the Church, to produce Christian life. It depends upon him as Teacher, Counsellor, and Guide."

This form of the Confession is of course rudely hammered out. To be of any value, it would need to be restated by such as have a finer sense of language than I. At any rate, it seems to embody the essential points of a Confession which can be commonly read and understood, it does not subject the supreme authority to a subordinate place, and it does point to the foundation of the church. It would be well for us to clear away the rubbish of opinions and return to the original source of Christian faith and life. We need, and that badly, a confession which every layman of any intelligence whatever, can understand and make his own. I do not believe that that substitute offered herein for our present confession is any deviation from the position of the founders of the Synod. Rather it seems to me to embody their principles. There is, however, lit-

tle hope on my part that this suggestion will be discussed as it should be. There is even less expectation that there will be any agreement on the part of our pastors. And there is no hope that a confession, stating in all simplicity the confession of the Evangelical Synod of North America, will be adopted.

But the day is coming when the church is going to have to strip itself of all excess baggage, when, like the sprinter, it will have to travel light in order to win the crown. It would be a happy day if our own church body could assume the leadership in such a movement. We would then be showing that spirit of unity which is essential to the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus, in his high-priestly prayer, petitioned "That they might all be one." It is our catering to the feuds and to the traditions of a bygone age that is retarding that process of becoming one today. Our own inheritance and our tradition did run contrary to this spirit—have we the courage and the conviction to keep it so? Through its new constitution the Synod is endeavoring to enter into a new period of service and growth. It needs only the vitalizing touch of an adequate, simple statement of what it believes to enable it to enter into the proposed inheritance. It needs a confession which is at the same time a creed to which every member can intelligently subscribe, and the truth and sufficiency of which, is the common experience of every follower of the Christ.

Die Ritschlsche Theologie.*

Von Professor Dr. R. H. Grützmacher.

I.

Um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts erfolgte ein außerordentlicher Umschwung im geistigen Leben. Die großen Systeme des deutschen Idealismus, sonderlich die Hegels und Schellings, verloren allen Kredit und Glauben. Man hielt es nicht mehr für möglich, auf spekulativem Weg den metaphysischen Sinn der Welt oder gar das Wesen Gottes zu erfassen. Die Gottes- wie die Geisteswelt schien für die menschliche Erkenntnis verschlossen. Aber auch auf dem Weg religiösen Fühlens und mystischen Erlebens im Sinn Schleiermachers wollte man sich nicht mehr Gottes bemächtigen. Das religiöse Leben befand sich in starkem Niedergang; denn die religiöse Erweckungsbewegung mit ihren kräftigen inneren Erschütterungen hatte ihre Kraft verloren. Das Interesse wandte sich von der Philosophie und Religion, der Metaphysik und Theologie ab. An ihre Stelle traten die **Naturwissenschaften, Soziologie und die exakt betriebene Geschichtswissenschaft.** Dazu nahmen praktisch-soziale und politische Bewegungen das öffentliche Interesse in Anspruch. Das Bedürfnis nach Weltanschauung und Lebenseinstellung begann mehr und mehr die aus der modernen Naturwissenschaft erwachsende Naturphilosophie zu befriedigen. Der Entwicklungsgedanke, der in der Hegelschen Philosophie die Wurzel einer idealistischen Weltanschauung war, wurde jetzt von der Naturwissenschaft übernommen, in ihrem Sinn mechanistisch-gesetzlich umgeformt und zur Ausdrucksform einer monistischen Weltanschauung. War bei **Darwin** — der englischen Geistesart entsprechend — noch eine große Zurückhaltung in der Verwendung des Entwicklungsgedankens für eine Natur- und Geistesphilosophie zu beobachten, so glaubte in Deutschland Häckel ihn zur Lösung aller Welträtsel verwenden zu können. Dieser **Monismus,** der schon einen stark materialistischen Anstrich trug, wurde vielfach durch eine Wiederbelebung des reinen **Materialismus** noch überboten. Es wurde schon früher festgestellt, wie Strauß und Feuerbach sich allmählich dem Materialismus zugewandt hatten; neben sie traten Männer wie Moleschott, Vogt, Büchner in weitverbreiteten populär-philosophischen Werken. Besondere Erfolge erzielte der Materialismus in seiner Anwendung auf eine Reihe einzelner Gebiete. In der sozialistischen Geschichtsphilosophie erschienen die materiellen Bedürfnisse und Schöpfungen als die treibenden Kräfte, durch die auch die geistigen Gebiete einschließlich der Religion und

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* Mangelnden Raumes halber ist ein Artikel über die „positive Vermittlungstheologie" (Beyschlag, B. Weiß, Dorner, J. Müller usw.) zurückgestellt worden. Editor.

des Christentums in ihrer Entstehung und Entwicklung entscheidend beeinflußt wurden. In den sozialen Kämpfen hatten die materiellen Ziele und Werte auf allen Seiten das Uebergewicht gewonnen. Auch im politischen Leben drehte sich alles um greifbare Macht. So wurde neben dem theoretischen der praktische Materialismus zu einem Grundelement der Lebenseinstellung.

Durch diese Veränderung im Geistesleben der Zeit hatten Religion und Theologie ihre Stütze in einer idealistischen Philosophie und einer weitverbreiteten Metaphysik völlig verloren. Die mit ihnen verbundene ältere liberale Theologie wurde darum in den Zusammenbruch der Hegelschen Philosophie hineingezogen. Der herrschende theoretische und praktische Materialismus schloß aber überhaupt die Existenz der Religion aus. Ihr Ende schien gekommen zu sein und erst recht das der Theologie als Wissenschaft. Da ergab sich eine Wendung in der Philosophie, die einen Ausweg auch für die Religion und Theologie darzubieten schien. In der Philosophie erhob sich nämlich der Ruf: **„Zurück zu Kant!"** Er wurde gehört, ein **Neukantianismus** bildete sich. Dieser interpretierte Kant ganz im Sinn eines Positivismus der theoretisch jede Metaphysik ablehnt, dafür aber eine praktische Ethik aufstellt, an die sich religiöse Postulate anhängen lassen. Nach dem Neukantianismus ist von Kant die Unmöglichkeit jeder Metaphysik und damit auch die völlige Unerkennbarkeit des Wesens der Dinge zwingend erwiesen. Wir können nur erkennen, daß wir nichts zu erkennen vermögen. Das gilt vor allen Dingen auch in Bezug auf die Gotteserkenntnis in positiver so gut wie in negativer Richtung. Aus theoretischen Beweisgründen und Spekulationen darf das Dasein Gottes weder bejaht noch verneint werden. Gott ist eine Größe, mit der die Philosophie und Wissenschaft nicht das Geringste zu tun haben. **Philosophie als Welt- oder gar als Gottesanschauung ist theoretisch unmöglich.** Wissenschaft im strengen Sinn sind nur die **Einzelwissenschaften.** An ihre Spitze tritt die mathematische Naturwissenschaft mit ihrer kausalen Methode, ihren Berechnungen und Gesetzesfeststellungen. Der Neukantianismus lehnt es aber auch ab, aus der exakten Naturwissenschaft eine monistische oder materialistische Naturphilosophie und Weltanschauung abzuleiten. Denn diese sind ebenso metaphysischer Natur wie die idealistischen Systeme und bedeuten eine Grenzüberschreitung hinsichtlich des der theoretischen Vernunft gezogenen Spielraums. Neben der exakten Naturwissenschaft wird nur noch eine Geschichtswissenschaft anerkannt, die sich aber von aller Philosophie fernzuhalten hat. Sie darf nur aus den Quellen geschöpfte Einzelresultate erarbeiten oder allenfalls den Naturgesetzen ähnliche Geschichtsgesetze feststellen.

Neben und völlig getrennt von der theoretischen Vernunft tritt im Neukantianismus **die praktische Vernunft, die es mit dem**

sittlichen Handeln zu tuen hat. Ihr Inhalt wird wesentlich im Sinn des geschichtlichen Kant verstanden. Jedem menschlichen Wesen ist ein kategorischer Imperativ eingeboren, der ohne Rücksicht auf andre — besonders eudämonistische — Motive unbedingte Pflichterfüllung gebietet. Diese Pflicht trägt zunächst das formale Merkmal der Allgemeingültigkeit in dem Sinn, daß die den Einzelnen in seinem Handeln leitenden Grundsätze für alle Menschen verbindlich sein müssen. Dann aber gewinnt die Pflicht den doppelten materialen Inhalt, daß wir unser geistige Persönlichkeit der Natur gegenüber behaupten und uns in gegenseitiger Achtung mit allen Menschen zu einem Reich der Geister verbinden sollen. Der einzelne Mensch vernimmt nicht nur selbständig in seinem Innern diesen kategorischen Imperativ, sondern er besitzt auch die Fähigkeit, ihn aus eigener Kraft zu verwirklichen. Trotz der aus der Natur kommenden bösen Hemmungen ist der Mensch doch von sich aus fähig, in Freiheit seine sittlichen Pflichten zu erfüllen. Auf praktischem Gebiet besitzt der Mensch nach der kantischen Ethik nicht nur die **Autonomie, sondern auch die Autarkie des sittlichen Handelns.**

Die Religion kommt weder für die Begründung noch für die Durchführung der Ethik in Betracht. Vielmehr kann sie nur die Kraft der sittlichen Gebote stärken und bestimmten sittlichen Postulaten die Erfüllung zusagen. Religion wird darum von Kant definiert als die Erkenntnis unsrer Pflichten als göttlicher Gebote. Der religiöse Mensch stellt hinter seinen freien Willen zur Pflichterfüllung noch das Gebot Gottes und stärkt dadurch jenen. Nach Kant hat das sittliche Handeln selbst ohne jede Rücksicht auf Erfolg oder Glück zu geschehen. Aber im Menschen liegt doch auch der Anspruch auf Glück, und die sittliche Weltordnung erfordert, daß die Tugend belohnt werde. Diese Verbindung von Tugend und Glückseligkeit erfolgt aber in dieser Wirklichkeit nicht und wird von der Naturordnung nicht durchgeführt. Infolgedessen postuliert Kant einen jenseitigen Zustand der **Unsterblichkeit,** in welchem dieser Ausgleich von Tugend und Glückseligkeit vollzogen wird. **Gott** ist dann diejenige Größe, die diese Verbindung stiftet. **In seinem moralischen Gottesbeweis gewinnt Kant Gott und Unsterblichkeit als sittliche Postulate.** Damit ist aber durchaus nicht gesagt, ob Gott und die Unsterblichkeit auch unter dem theoretischen Gesichtspunkt der metaphysischen Wahrheit tatsächlich existieren. Der Neukantianismus verfolgt besonders eine Linie bei Kant, die der Philosoph **Vaihinger** in seinem zwar erst spät veröffentlichten, aber schon viel früher konzipierten **„Philosophie des Als ob"** unterstrichen hat. Danach sollen wir uns sittlich so verhalten, „als ob" Gott und Unsterblichkeit existierten. Ja selbst wenn Gott nicht existierte, würde die theoretisch falsche Gottesvorstellung doch ihren praktisch-sittlichen Wahrheitswert behalten: „Auch Kants berühmter

moralischer Gottesbeweis ist nur eine Als-ob-Betrachtung zu praktischem Behuf — wenn Du sittlich handeln willst, so muß Du so handeln, als ob ein Gott, als ob Dein Gott Dir das befohlen hätte."

Soweit die Neukantische Philosophie überhaupt auf die **christlichen Einzeldogmen** und auf die kirchliche Entwicklung einging, stellte sie beide ganz unter moralische Gesichtspunkte — nach dem Vorbild von Kants Behandlungsweise in „Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft." **Jesu Bedeutung ist eine ausschließlich moralische**; die Kirche oder wie man lieber sagte das Reich Gottes ist eine Gesellschaft unter Tugendgesetzen zur sittlichen Einigung der Menschheit, die Reformation eine Bewegung zur Förderung innerweltlicher Ethik.

Der Neukantianismus schließt mithin jede theoretische Metaphysik und Weltanschauung idealistischer, materialistischer, religiös-theologischer Prägung aus. Er legt alles Gewicht auf das aus eigner Vernunft und Kraft erfolgende sittliche Handeln, das die Sicherstellung des Geistes gegenüber der Natur in der eigenen Persönlichkeit und die geistige Gemeinschaft mit allen Menschen zum Ziel hat. Aus der Sittlichkeit können religiöse Postulate wie Gott und Unsterblichkeit abgeleitet werden, die aber nur unter dem Gesichtspunkt des praktischen Wertes, nicht ihrer theoretischen Wahrheit angesehen werden sollen. In der extremsten Ausführung des Neukantianismus werden die religiösen Vorstellungen als praktische Werte behandelt, trotzdem sie theoretisch falsch sind. Er berührt sich hier mit dem anglo-amerikanischen Pragmatismus, in dem alles Gewicht auf das Handeln und seinen Erfolg und nicht auf das Erkennen der Wahrheit gelegt wird.

II.

Unter den Einflüssen dieser geistigen Situation entstand und entwickelte sich die **Ritschlsche Theologie.** Das Maß der direkten und bewußten Beziehungen zu dem Neukantianismus ist bei den verschiedenen Vertretern der Ritschlschen Theologie ein differentes und zwar bei dem Meister ein loseres als bei Einzelnen seiner Schüler. Hier aber kommt es wesentlich auf die Gesamterscheinung des Ritschlianismus an und der Hervorhebung derjenige Züge, die ihn mit der Zeitphilosophie verbanden.

Ritschl lehnt zwar im Prinzip jede Verbindung von Theologie und Philosophie ab, erklärt aber dann doch in dem ersten geschichtlichen Band seines großen Werkes: **„Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung"** (1. Auflage 1870 ff.; 3. Auflage 1889 ff.): „Kant bietet noch jetzt für die richtige Grundidee des Christentums den unverrückbaren Maßstab dar. Er bringt die Erneuerung der sittlichen Weltanschauung der Reformation." Allerdings lehnt **Ritschl das Ueberwiegen der Moral über die Religion bei Kant ab. Dagegen**

ist er mit diesem ganz in der Ablehnung einer theoretischen Metaphysik gerade auch in Bezug auf die Gotteserkenntnis einig, da eine solche an der praktischen Bedeutung Gottes für die menschliche Persönlichkeit und deren Selbständigkeit gegenüber der Natur uninteressiert sei. „Eine rein theoretische uninteressierte Erkenntnis Gottes ist nicht als die notwendige Voraussetzung der Glaubenserkenntnis zu erstreben." Die Religion ist vielmehr nur einer solchen Weltanschauung geneigt, die dem persönlichen Geist seinen Wert gegenüber den Hemmungen der Natur und den Naturwirkungen der menschlichen Gesellschaft erhält und bestätigt. Das aber tut die Kantische Weltanschauung. Darum sucht Ritschl durch Vergleich und Anschluß an das Kantische individuelle und soziale Lebensideal einen Wahrheitsbeweis für das Christentum zu liefern: „Der christliche Gedanke der Versöhnung ist an dem Gedanken des sittlichen Reiches Gottes zu erproben, in welchem Kant rein philosophisch den Endzweck der Welt erkennt. Sofern die Idee der Versöhnung diese Probe besteht, wird aber der wissenschaftliche Beweis für die Wahrheit des Christentums vollzogen." Während Ritschls Schüler Julius Kaftan diese Idee weiter ausführte, hat **Ritschl später selbst jeden sich an eine Philosophie einschließlich derjenigen Kants anlehnenden Beweis fallen gelassen.** Er zog sich vielmehr auf den Satz zurück: „Der wissenschaftliche Beweis für die Wahrheit des Christentums wird überhaupt nur in der Linie gesucht werden dürfen: Wer den Willen Gottes erfüllen wird, wird erkennen, daß Christi Verkündigung wahr ist (Johannes 7, 17)." Dementsprechend hat die christliche Theologie auf sich gestellt nur den christlichen Gedanken von Gott und der Seligkeit des Menschen im Reich Gottes unter praktisch-ethischen Gesichtspunkten darzustellen. Infolgedessen sind alle die Elemente aus dem überlieferten Dogma und aus der traditionellen Religiosität auszuschalten, die keine unmittelbare Bedeutung für jene Gedankenreihen haben. **Ritschl beseitigt oder drängt ganz in den Hintergrund alle die altchristlichen und reformatorischen Dogmen, die seiner Meinung nach nur metaphysischen, aber nicht ethischen Charakter tragen.** So verschwindet die Trinitäts- wie die Zweinaturenlehre. In der Gottesvorstellung wird der Begriff der Absolutheit bekämpft, nicht minder die Eschatologie aller metaphysischen Merkmale entkleidet. Wie Ritschl das intellektuelle Element aus der Thelogie zu entfernen suchte, so nicht minder das **gefühlsmäßig-mystische** in der Religion. Er fand es besonders im Pietismus und in der Erweckungsbewegung herrschend. Er übte an ihm Kritik in seiner „Geschichte des Pietismus" und ging dem mystischen Element ablehnend auch da nach, wo es — wie in der „unio mystika" — in den Altprotestantismus eingedrungen war.

Stellte Schleiermacher in der Religion das Gefühl in den Vordergrund und verband sie darum mit der Kunst, Hegel und die ältere liberale Theologie den Intellekt und verknüpfte sie darum mit der Metaphysik, so Ritschl den Willen. **Infolgedessen vollzieht er eine Ethisierung des Christentums in der Linie Kants.** Aber im Unterschied zu diesem will er doch die Ethik nicht geschichtslos rational begründen, sondern in der geschichtlichen Offenbarung in Christus wurzeln lassen. Dadurch gewinnt die Ritschlsche Theologie deutliche Zusammenhänge mit dem Altprotestantismus und mit dessen gleichzeitiger Erneuerung in der konfessionellen, besonders der Erlanger Theologie. Aber die altprotestantischen Prinzipien bei Ritschl werden doch immer wieder durch die Tendenz zu einer neuprotestantischen Ethisierung zurückgedrängt.

III.

Quelle und Norm für die authentische Kenntnis der christlichen Religion sollen nur die **biblischen Urkunden** sein, welche der Stiftungsepoche des Christentums nahestehen. „Die Urkunden der wirksamen Offenbarung sind die Bücher des Neuen Testaments." In der Beurteilung der Echtheit der neutestamentlichen Urkunden ist Ritschl durchaus konservativ. Als Maßstab für die Kanonizität der neutestamentlichen Schriften nennt er ihren engen Zusammenhang mit dem Alten Testament „ihre authentisch alttestamentliche Bedingtheit" im Unterschied zu den vom Heidentum schon beeinflußten Nachapostolischen Schriften. **Ritschl verbindet das Christentum nur mit dem Judentum;** er isoliert es viel stärker von der allgemeinen Religionsgeschichte und von der natürlichen Gottesoffenbarung, als dies in der altkirchlichen, altreformatorischen und auch in der neueren konfessionellen, geschweige denn in der religionsgeschichtlichen Theologie geschehen ist. **Ritschl ist demnach im Prinzip durchaus Biblizist, aber er deutet** — wie das der zweite, dem biblischen Stoff gewidmete Teil von „Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung" zeigt — **die biblischen Gedanken exegetisch stark um.** Er entleert zum Beispiel den Begriff des Sohnes Gottes seines metaphysischen Gehaltes, erklärt den Zorn Gottes für ein „heimatloses wie gestaltloses Theologumenon" und entfernt alle objektiven Elemente aus den Stellen über den Versöhnungstod Jesu. Die religiöse Erfahrung kommt für ihn nicht als Quelle der christlichen Wahrheit in Betracht. **Er ist ein Gegner der Religionspsychologie.** Sein extremer Biblizismus, der sowohl Religionsgeschichte wie Religionspsychologie ablehnt, hat ihn aber nicht an einer weitgehenden Umgestaltung der wichtigsten biblisch-altprotestantischen Lehren gehindert.

Aus dem **Wesen Gottes** ist nicht nur der Zorn, sondern auch **die Heiligkeit zu entfernen,** denn „der zureichende Begriff von Gott

ist in dem Begriff der Liebe ausgedrückt." Gott ist nur Vater und nicht Richter. Auch durch die Sünde des Menschen ist seine Gesinnung keine andre geworden. Er ist vielmehr als liebender Vater stets in gleichem Maß bereit gewesen, den Menschen bedingungslos zu vergeben und sie wieder in seine Gemeinschaft zuzulassen. Nachdem aber die Menschen in der Sünde ihre Ehrfurcht und ihr Vertrauen Gott entzogen, haben sie sich ihrerseits von Gott das falsche Bild einer Heiligkeit gemacht, vor deren Zorn sie sich fürchteten. Infolgedessen wagten die Menschen Gott nicht mehr zu nahen. Um den Menschen diese irrtümliche Vorstellung zu nehmen und die absolute Gewißheit der stets gleichbleibenden Vaterliebe eindrücklich zu machen, offenbart sich Gott in Christus. **Die Offenbarung in Christus hat mithin nicht den Zweck, ein neues Verhältnis zwischen Gott und Menschen zu begründen, sondern nur den Menschen die stets gleiche Liebesgesinnung Gottes zu offenbaren.** Zugleich aber erscheint in **Christus** der sündenfreie sittliche Mensch in vollendeter Gestalt, der im Vertrauen auf Gott sich die Welt unterwirft. „Christus muß in seiner eigentümlichen Berufstätigkeit ebenso getragen von Gott, wie als selbständig gegen alle Welt gedacht werden." Vor allen Dingen in seinem Sterben bewährt er seine sittliche Berufstreue. Für Ritschl ist „Christus der vollendete Offenbarer Gottes und das offenbare Urbild der geistigen Beherrschung der Welt." Ritschl will diese beiden Ausdrücke zugleich im „Prädikate seiner Gottheit" zusammenfassen. Aber wie eine Reihe von Restriktionen zeigen, will er **Christus nicht im realen metaphysischen Sinn Gottheit und Präexistenz beilegen, sondern nur den göttlichen Wert seiner sittlichen Offenbarerpersönlichkeit für die christliche Gemeinde ausdrücken.** „Wie die Person Christi geworden und dasjenige geworden ist, als welches sie sich für die ethische und religiöse Schätzung darbietet, ist kein Gegenstand theologischer Forschung, weil das Problem über jede Art von Forschung hinausliegt. Was die kirchliche Ueberlieferung in dieser Hinsicht darbietet, ist in sich undeutlich." Durch Christus können die Menschen die gläubige Ueberzeugung von der Liebe Gottes und von seiner Sündenvergebung oder seiner Rechtfertigung empfangen. Sie lassen ihr Mißtrauen gegen Gott nunmehr fallen oder versöhnen sich ihrerseits mit Gott. Wie schon die Umstellung der beiden Begriffe **Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung** im Titel des Werkes zeigt, ist für Ritschl **die Versöhnung nicht die Voraussetzung, sondern die Folge der Rechtfertigung.** Rechtfertigung ist die in der Offenbarung durch Christus jedem Gläubigen zugängliche Sündenvergebung. Versöhnung ist die darauffolgende Aussöhnung des Menschen mit Gott. „In dem Begriff der Versöhnung ist ausgedrückt, daß diejenigen, welche bisher in aktivem Widerspruch mit Gott begriffen waren, durch die Verzeihung in die zustimmende Richtung auf Gott versetzt worden

sind." Der Zweck aber dieser göttlichen Vergebung und menschlichen Versöhnung ist die Entstehung einer Sittlichkeit, wie sie in Christus wirklich war, in seiner Gemeinde und durch diese auch in dem einzelnen Christen. Beide werden durch die Verbindung mit Gott Herren über die Natur und die von ihnen ausgehenden Hemmungen. „Die religiöse Herrschaft über die Welt, welche die direkte Bestimmung der Versöhnung mit Gott durch Christus bildet, wird durch den Glauben an die liebevolle Vorsehung Gottes, durch die Tugenden der Demut und der Geduld endlich durch das Dankgebet ausgeübt." „Für die christliche Gemeinde ist das Danken die dem Bitten übergeordnete Anerkennung Gottes." Der einzelne Christ vollzieht dieses sittlich-religiöse Leben in einem bestimmten weltlichen Beruf, die christliche Gemeinschaft, indem sie sich eng mit dem Staat verbindet, ihm politische Entschlossenheit für die Durchführung geistiger Güter gibt.

Besonders deutlich kommen die neuprotestantischen Grundtendenzen Ritschls in seiner Auffassung der **Reformation** zum Ausdruck wie er sie in der „Geschichte des Pietismus" (1880) und in seiner Festrede über „Luther" (1883) zum Ausdruck gebracht hat. Danach beharrte das reformatorische Dogma wesentlich noch auf der katholischen Stufe, sodaß „die reformatorischen Ideen in den theologischen Büchern Luthers und Melanchtons mehr verdeckt als offenbar sind." **Nur in ihrem sittlichen Lebensideal stellt die Reformation etwas neues dar.** „Wenn die Reformation des 16. Jahrhunderts kein Ideal des christlichen Lebens aufzeigte, dann würde man in großer Verlegenheit sein, ihr eine epochemachende Bedeutung zuzugestehen. In dem Lebensideal unsrer Reformatoren stehen der Glaube an Gottes Vorsehung nebst dem Gebet und die Schätzung der weltlichen Berufe als des Ortes für die Uebung der Liebe gegen die Menschen in gegenseitiger Wechselbeziehung." Bei dieser Auffassung der Reformation ist es verständlich, daß Ritschl eine sehr gründliche Reform des Altprotestantismus verlangt und sie durch seine Lehre vollziehen will. In der Tat hat **Ritschl trotz Beibehaltung ja Verstärkung des altprotestantischen Biblizismus eine starke Umgestaltung des Christentums in der Richtung auf einen ethischen Neuprotestantismus durchgeführt.** Er hat den Glauben an die Versöhnung des heiligen Gottes durch das Werk Christi, sonderlich seines Todes, ersetzt durch das Vertrauen auf die stets vorhandene, nur in Christus besonders eindrücklich offenbarte göttliche Vaterliebe. An die Stelle des spezifisch christlichen Versöhnungsglaubens tritt ein allgemeiner Vorsehungsglaube. Der Hauptzweck des Christentums erscheint aber in der Ermöglichung einer Sittlichkeit im Kantischen Sinn. Diese läßt den Einzelnen seine Herrschaft über die Natur in einem innerweltlich-sittlichen Beruf erweisen und die Kirche

vor allem die sittlichen Zwecke des Staates unterstützen. — Diese neuprotestantischen Tendenzen Ritschls treten bei einigen seiner Schüler noch deutlicher hervor.

IV.

Von allen Schülern Ritschls hat **W. Herrmann** (1846—1922) im engsten Anschluß an den Kantianismus **die antimetaphysischen, antimystischen und ethizistischen Gedankengänge Ritschls am kräftigsten ausgebildet.** Er hat besonders als sittliche Persönlichkeit und Lehrer viele Jahrzehnte in Marburg eine sehr einflußreiche Wirksamkeit ausgeübt. In seiner Erstlingsschrift: „Die Metaphysik in der Theologie" (1876) erklärt er: „Für die Erschwerung oder Erleichterung der religiösen Aufgabe macht es gar nichts aus, ob die dogmatische Metaphysik, welcher der Christ folgt, materialistisch oder idealistisch gerichtet ist." Denn -- so führt seine zweite Schrift: „Die Religion im Verhältnis zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit" (1879) aus — „Ich habe mich an Kant angeschlossen, in dessen Trennung der theoretischen Erkenntnis von der sittlich bedingten Ueberzeugung ich den Freibrief für die aus den Fesseln philosophischer Weltanschauung erlöste Theologie erblicke." Herrmann geht wie Kant von einer völlig **autonom** — auch von der Religion unabhängigen — **Sittlichkeit** aus. In seiner „Ethik" (5. Auflage 1913) stellt er fest: „Jeder Mensch kann die Frage nach dem Inhalt des sittlichen Gebotes aus sich selbst erledigen." Dieses stellt zwei Forderungen: „Wir sollen unbedingt wahrhaftige geistige Gemeinschaft mit andern wollen und wir sollen dadurch selbst innerlich selbständig sein." Der Befolgung dieser Gebote stellt sich jedoch das Schwergewicht unsrer Natürlichkeit oder die Sünde entgegen. Die Kraft zum Guten gibt darum erst die Religion und zwar das Christentum, ganz speziell das „Innere Leben Jesu." **Während Herrmann in der autonomen Begründung und in der Inhaltsbestimmung der Ethik Kant einfach folgt, lehnt er dessen sittliche Autarkie zu Gunsten der geschichtlichen Offenbarung in der Person Jesu ab.** Sieht man allerdings genauer zu, so findet man, daß das Bild Jesu bei Herrmann dem allgemeinen sittlichen Ideal sehr stark angenähert ist. Darüber hat er sich in seinem verbreitetsten Buch: „Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott" (1886) näher ausgesprochen. Herrmann will bei der Erfassung des Bildes Jesu zwar von der evangelischen Ueberlieferung ausgehen, dann aber im Hinblick auf die historisch-kritischen Unsicherheiten von ihr unabhängig werden. Darum soll sittlich-religiöse Bedeutung nur das „innere Leben Jesu" haben. Dieses „innere Leben" hat aber wesentlich zum Inhalt das allgemeine ethische Ideal der geistigen Persönlichkeit und der Gemeinschaftsstiftung. Indem wir unser eigenes unvollkommenes sittliches Leben mit dem vollendeten sitt-

lichen Leben Jesu verbinden, empfangen wir die Kraft, das Gute zu tuen. Im Anblick Jesu gewinnen wir zugleich Gottesgewißheit in dem Sinn, daß das Gute oder Gott die Macht über die Wirklichkeit ist. Indem dieser Gott durch Jesus mit uns in Verkehr tritt, offenbart er sich uns als Vaterliebe, welche uns die Sünde vergibt. „In dem grenzenlosen Vertrauen zu Jesu Güte wird sein Glaube an Gott unser Glaube. Wir merken, daß uns dabei nicht etwas Fremdes aufgedrängt wird, sondern daß eine Ueberzeugung, die in uns selbst hervordrang, von den Schranken unsrer Schwachheit befreit wird." Das einzige, was uns aus den Evangelien als eine uns überwältigende und jeden Zweifel ausschließende Wirklichkeit entgegentreten kann, ist gerade das Zarteste, das innere Leben Jesu selbst. Nur sofern wir selbst nach einem rechtschaffenen Inhalt unsers Lebens verlangen, können wir die Kraft und Fülle dieser Seele wahrnehmen." So erscheint bei Hermann das „innere Leben Jesu" im Grunde nur als eine plastisch-persönliche, von der Schwachheit befreite Gestaltung des allgemein sittlichen Ideales. Schon vorhandener sittlicher Besitz im Menschen wird durch das Christentum von seinen Hemmungen befreit und mit der religiösen Gewißheit der sündenvergebenden Vaterliebe Gottes verbunden. Die ethizistische Richtung bei Herrmann löst wie bei Kant weitgehend nicht nur die metaphysischen, sondern auch die geschichtlichen Elemente des Christentums auf. „Wenn wir uns von Luther führen lassen wollen, so müssen wir das Christentum Luthers von der Theologie Luthers unterscheiden, die von katholischen Voraussetzungen aus entworfen ist."

Konsequenterweise lehnt Herrmann auch jeden Versuch eine normative christliche Glaubenslehre zu schaffen ab und unterscheidet stark zwischen einem Christentum Luthers und einer Theologie Luthers. Bei Herrmann liegt ein scharf ausgeprägter ethischer Neuprotestantismus vor, der unter dem Einfluß Kants grundlegende geschichtliche und metaphysische Bestandteile des Altprotestantismus beseitigt hat.

Während Herrmann den neukantischen Ethizismus Ritschls bis zur letzten Konsequenz durchgeführt hat, ist **Harnack** (geb. 1851) der Vollender seines **Historismus.** Als Historiker hat Adolf Harnack eine Ueberfülle bedeutsamster historischer Einzelarbeiten veröffentlicht, besonders in Bezug auf das Neue Testament — hier immer konservativer werdend — und in Bezug auf die alte Kirchengeschichte — hier im „Marcion" das Ideal seiner Theologie schauend. Er hat aber auch die prinzipielle Frage nach dem **Wesen des Christentums** mit historischen Mitteln zu beantworten gesucht. In seinem außerordentlich weitverbreiteten Buch „Das Wesen des Christentums" (1. Auflage 1900) erklärt er: „Was ist Christen-

tum? — Lediglich im historischen Sinn wollen wir diese Frage hier zu beantworten suchen, das heißt mit den Mitteln der geschichtlichen Wissenschaft und mit der Lebenserfahrung, die aus erlebter Geschichte erworben ist." Allein in der hinzugefügten Erfahrung verbirgt sich eine dogmatische Stellungnahme, die Harnacks geschichtliche Feststellungen maßgebend bestimmt. Sie trägt rational-religiösen und -ethischen Charakter. Der Rationalismus spricht sich ähnlich wie bei Strauß in dem Satz aus: „Gewiß es geschehen keine Wunder, aber des Wunderbaren und Unerklärlichen gibt es genug." Positiv reduziert Harnack den Inhalt des Evangeliums auf die Formel: „In dem Gefüge Gott der Vater, die Vorsehung, die Kindschaft, der unendliche Wert der Menschenseele spricht sich das ganze Evangelium aus." Diese Erkenntnisse decken sich wesentlich mit der Dogmatik Ritschls. In negativer Hinsicht lehnt Harnack die Gottessohnschaft Jesu im metaphysischem Sinn ab und stellt fest, daß man „den Osterglauben auch ohne die Osterbotschaft haben kann." In der ersten Auflage erklärte er sogar: „Nicht der Sohn, sondern allein der Vater gehört in das Evangelium wie es Jesus verkündet hat hinein."

In seiner großen **„Dogmengeschichte"** (1885) folgt Harnack den antimetaphysischen Tendenzen Kants und Ritschls. Er definiert: „Die kirchlichen Dogmen sind die begrifflich formulierten und für eine wissenschaftlich apologetische Behandlung ausgeprägten christlichen Glaubenslehren, welche die Erkenntnis Gottes, der Welt und der durch Christus geschehenen Erlösung umfassen und den objektiven Inhalt der Religion darstellen." In solchen Dogmen sieht Harnack eine Gefahr, daß das Wissen den Glauben verdränge. Als seine Meinung erscheint zunächst die Behauptung, das Dogma widerspreche in jeder Form prinzipiell dem Christentum und stelle eine überwundene oder zu überwindende Größe dar. Anderseits erkennt doch Harnack an, daß das Evangelium auch schon bei Jesus einen festen Inhalt hat, der sich nichts anders als begrifflich, das heißt aber in Dogmen formulieren läßt. Infolgedessen beschränkt sich seine ablehnende Kritik auf das **altkirchliche Dogma,** denn bei diesem soll der griechische Geist der entscheidende Faktor gewesen sein, sodaß Harnacks berühmte Definition lautet: **„Das Dogma ist in seiner Konzeption und in seinem Aufbau ein Werk des griechischen Geistes auf dem Boden des Evangeliums."** Von diesem Dogma muß er aber weiter feststellen, daß es die Reformation nicht nur stehen ließ, sondern es auch durch seine Verbindung mit dem persönlichen Glauben restaurierte und kräftigte. „Es hat keinen Theologen nach Athanasius gegeben, der die Lehre von der Gottheit Christi für den Glauben so lebendig gemacht hat, wie

Luther." Dafür schreibt Harnack der altprotestantischen Reformation einen doppelten Charakter zu: „Die Reformation, wie sie sich im Christentum Luthers darstellt, ist in vieler Hinsicht eine altkatholische, respektive auch eine mittelalterliche Erscheinung; dagegen auf ihren religiösen Kern beurteilt ist sie es nicht; vielmehr Wiederherstellung des Paulinischen Christentums im Geist einer neuen Zeit."

Eine großzügige Verbindung der Ritschlschen Theologie mit dem philosophischen Gedankenkreis Kants hat **Julius Kaftan** in Berlin (1849—1926) in einer seiner ersten und einer seiner letzten Schriften unternommen. In **„Die Wahrheit der christlichen Religion"** (1888) versucht er zu beweisen, „das nur die christliche Idee vom Reich Gottes als dem höchsten Gut der Menschheit den Anforderungen entspricht, welche an die wahre, vernünftige, allgemein gültige Idee vom höchsten Gut gestellt werden könne: „Wie bei Kant ist jedoch dieses Gottesreich nur ein Postulat der Vernunft." „Ueber seine offenbarungsmäßige geschichtliche Wirklichkeit entscheidet erst die Gewißheit des Glaubens," — für die jener Beweis überflüssig ist. In der Schrift **„Philosophie des Protestantismus"** (1917) sieht Kaftan mit Ritschl die für den Protestantismus bedeutsame Leistung Kants in der Begrenzung des theoretischen Erkennens und in dem Primat der praktischen Vernunft. — In seiner weitverbreiteten **„Dogmatik"** (7. und 8. Auflage 1920) vertritt Kaftan im Prinzip den biblizistischen Offenbarungspositivismus Ritschls, nähert sich aber in der Tat auch bei manchen Dogmen wie zum Beispiel der Absolutheit Gottes und der Gottheit Christi — „Die Christologie ist nichts anders als die Lehre von der Gottheit Christi" — so stark der kirchlichen Anschauung, daß man hier nicht mehr von einem Neuprotestantismus reden kann. Das gilt auch von andern Vertretern der „Ritschlschen Rechten" wie etwa von **Th. Häring** in Tübingen, der sich besonders in der Versöhnungslehre von Ritschl entfernt und biblischen Gedankengängen angeschlossen hat, wie von **Kattenbusch** in Halle.

V.

In der dritten Generation entfernen sich die mit der Ritschlschen Theologie zusammenhängenden Theologen immer entscheidender von den Grundthesen Ritschls, indem sie zugleich Anregungen von der altprotestantischen wie der religionsgeschichtlichen Theologie aufnehmen. Das gilt von **Wobbermin** (geb. 1869 in Göttingen), einem Schüler Kaftans in seinem großen Werk: „Systematische Theologie nach religionspsychologischer Methode" (1913). Er nimmt, wie der Titel seines Werkes zeigt, die von Ritschl abgelehnte Religionspsychologie zum Ausgangspunkt und verbindet sie in eigentümlicher Weise mit der Religionsgeschichte. Das Haupt-

interesse der Religion liegt in ihrer Wahrheit, welcher der Entwurf einer dogmatischen Metaphysik entspricht. In der Definition von Religion und Christentum folgt Wobbermin der Ritschlschen Rechten.

Gleichfalls aus religionspsychologischen und religionsgeschichtlichen Untersuchungen ist die sehr verbreitete Monographie von Professor **Otto** (geb. 1863) in Marburg **„Das Heilige"** (1. Auflage 1917) erwachsen. Dieser von Ritschl ganz zurückgestellte Begriff erscheint hier als der eigentliche Kern aller Religion und gerade auch der biblisch-lutherischen Frömmigkeit. Das Heilige ist einmal das Numinose, das Mysteriöse, das „Ganz Andere," welches das Gemüt des Menschen mit starrem Erstaunen erfüllt. Anderseits besitzt aber das Heilige etwas Faszinierendes und Anziehendes, welches dem Menschen Vertrauen abgewinnt. Das Heilige setzt sich aus irrationalen und rationalen Elementen zusammen. Dementsprechend enthält auch die Glaubenslehre sowohl rationale als auch irrationale Sätze. Mit dieser Auffassung des Heiligen hat sich Otto stark einer religiösen Grundposition des Altprotestantismus genähert.

Die jungfräuliche Geburt Jesu.

Von Dr. C. Schieler.

„Ich glaube an Jesum Christum, Seinen eingeborenen Sohn, unsern Herrn, der empfangen ist vom Heiligen Geist, geboren aus Maria der Jungfrau" — so bekennen wir betend unsern christlichen Glauben allsonntäglich mit der Gemeinde, so bekennen wir gemeinsam mit den Eltern und Paten bei der Taufe der Kinder, so bekennen die Konfirmanden ihren Glauben in ernster, heiliger, entscheidender Stunde; auf dieses Bekenntnis wurden wir verpflichtet bei unsrer Ordination als Prediger der Evangelischen Kirche. Hiedurch bekennen wir uns und leiten andre Christen an, sich zu bekennen zu dem Glauben, daß Jesus Christus, unser Herr, ist geboren von einer Jungfrau, der Jungfrau Maria. Handeln wir damit recht? Ist dieser Glaube auch angesichts der neuern und neuesten Bibelkritik berechtigt? Es ist ein heftiger Streit hierüber entbrannt, der mit einer gewissen unverkennbaren Erbitterung nun schon lange Zeit geführt wird, nicht allein in Schriften der Gelehrten, in Reden vor Theologen- und Laienkreisen, sondern sogar auf gewissen Kanzeln; der Streit ist aus den theologischen Lehrsälen bis in die bescheidensten Studierstuben des Landpastors getragen worden; namhafte Laien, berühmte Scientisten haben sich eingehend damit beschäftigt.

So erscheint der Wunsch ganz berechtigt, diese Frage auch in unserm Kreise „sine ira et studio" möglichst sachgemäß zu behandeln.

Zuerst wollen wir die Geschichte dieses Glaubens in Kürze betrachten. Derselbe ist so alt als das Christentum; er wurde von der christlichen Kirche gelehrt zu jeder Zeit und in jedem Land. Das ist eine sehr wichtige Tatsache. Er hat unzählige heftige Kontroversen in der Lehre der Kirche und all die großen Spaltungen in der Kirche überdauert. Er wird gelehrt in der römisch- und in der griechisch-katholischen Kirche; wird gelehrt in den Kirchen des Protestantismus. So sehr auch die römische Kirche und der Protestantismus, was Lehre betrifft, von einander abweichen: beide große, über die ganze Erde verbreiteten kirchlichen Gemeinschaften glauben und lehren die jungfräuliche Geburt Jesu. Und als die protestantische Kirche sich spaltete in Lutheraner und Reformierte und in die anglokanische Kirche Englands: alle hielten fest an der Jungfrau-Geburt Jesu; und auch die von der englischen Hochkirche getrennten Nonkonformisten: die Baptisten, die Kongregationalisten und die Presbyterianer, alle bekennen diesen Glauben. Und ziehen wir Amerika in unsre geschichtliche Betrachtung ein, so finden wir dieselbe erstaunliche Tatsache, daß die vielen christlichen Gemeinschaften, welche hier auf dem Boden des Protestantismus im Laufe der

Zeit sich bildeten, alle mit wenigen Ausnahmen, den Glauben an die jungfräuliche Geburt Jesu bekennen und lehren.

Dieser Glaube ist deutlichst ausgedrückt in allen großen Glaubensbekenntnissen, im apostolischen, nizänischen, in dem der Synode von Konstantinopel und Chalcedon; das sind die alten Bekenntnisse. Aber auch die der neueren Zeit: die Augsburger Konfession, die Westminster Konfession und die 39 Artikel der anglikanischen Kirche drücken die jungfräuliche Geburt Jesu deutlichst aus. Dazu kann ich noch das in Musik gesetzte Glaubensbekenntnis der Kirche fügen, das herrliche „Te Deum," welches Ambrosius und Augustinus zugeschrieben wird. Zuletzt kommt noch als die alles andre überragende Tatsache hinzu: die jungfräuliche Geburt ist in der Heiligen Schrift sowohl des Alten als auch des Neuen Testaments gelehrt, ist also ein Bestandteil des Wortes Gottes — eine von Gott geoffenbarte Wahrheit. Wer demnach die Heilige Schrift und zwar die ganze Heilige Schrift, wie sie uns von der Kirche Christi geboten ist, als vom Heiligen Geist inspiriert und darum als Gottes Wort anerkennt, muß auch konsequenter Weise an die jungfräuliche Geburt Jesu glauben und daran festhalten.

Daß im zweiten Jahrhundert die Ebioniten und Gnostiker diese Lehre als eine schöne Erfindung zurückwiesen, daß die Deisten des 17. Jahrhunderts sie als Ausgeburt phantastischer Schwärmerei und als unmöglich verwarfen, und daß auch die Rationalisten des 19. Jahrhunderts sie als Legende, als Mythe betrachteten, wird die nicht sehr verwundern, welche diese Geistesrichtungen näher kennen. Aber in unsern Tagen wird der Glaube an die jungfräuliche Geburt Jesu nicht bloß von Ungläubigen und Skeptikern, nicht bloß von solchen, die außerhalb der Kirche Christi stehen, sondern auch von solchen angezweifelt und geleugnet, verworfen und bekämpft, welche gläubige Christen sein wollen, von Geistlichen und Laien, von Professoren der Theologie und gelehrten Laien, von solchen, die eines großen Rufes auf dem Gebiet der Wissenschaft sich erworben haben. Ein altes Dogma der christlichen Kirche, das von allen Zweigen der Kirche Christi festgehalten wurde und noch festgehalten wird, das wird nun mit selter Energie bekämpft und verworfen von solchen, die gläubige Christen zu sein behaupten. Daß dadurch Verwirrung der Gemüter, eine beklagenswerte Konfussion entsteht, ist leicht begreiflich.

Um diese Situation recht zu verstehen, ist es notwendig, den Ausgangspunkt und den Verlauf des mit großer Erbitterung und mit Aufbietung aller zu gebote stehenden wissenschaftlichen Mitteln geführten Kampfes, näher zu betrachten. In Deutschland wurde der Streit angeregt durch die Weigerung des Pfarrers Lizentiat Christoph Schrempf in Württemberg, das Apostolische Glaubens-

bekenntnis bei Taufen zu gebrauchen; und der Grund dieser Weigerung oder, ich will lieber sagen, einer der Gründe dieser Weigerung und zwar der schwerwiegendste, waren die Worte des Symbolums: „Empfangen vom Heiligen Geist, geboren von der Jungfrau Maria." Da Schrempfs Gemeinde von seinem Subjektivismus nichts wissen wollte und das Konsistorium bat, ihr einen andern Geistlichen zu schicken, suspendierte diese Kirchenbehörde Schrempf und setzte ihn, da er fortgesetzt auf seiner Lehrwillkür beharrte, „wegen Verfehlung wider die übernommene Dienstpflicht" im Jahre 1892 ab. Schrempfs Entlassung regte weite Kreise Deutschlands auf, da in Schrempf die sogenannte moderne Theologie sich selbst verurteilt fühlte. Professor Harnack, der jetzt als Haupt der modernen Bibelkritiker gilt, mischte sich in diesen Streit ein, der immer weitere Kreise ergriff und bei vielen Theologen eine Verstimmtheit gegen die moderne Thologie auslöste. Der Evangelische Oberkirchenrat erklärte, „daß er bei aller evangelischen Weitherzigkeit und entfernt davon, aus dem Bekenntnis oder aus jedem Einzelstück desselben ein starres Lehrgesetz zu machen, doch etwaige agitatorische Versuche, das Apostolikum aus seiner Stellung zu verdrängen, bei seinen Geistlichen nicht dulden werde." (25. November 1892.) Was speziell unsre Frage betrifft, so anerkennt Harnack wohl, daß die Jungfraugeburt Jesu ein integraler Bestandteil des Matthäus- und Lukas-Evangeliums sei, meint aber etwas naiv, „daß irgend ein Weg sich finden lasse, auf welchem die betreffenden Stellen in Matthäus und Lukas rechtmäßig gestrichen werden könnten als nicht zu dem Originaltext dieser Evangelien gehörend," wie er ja die Ansicht offen aussprach, daß „ein gereifter Christ an mannigfachen Sätzen der Evangelien Anstoß nehmen könne." Das ist so ganz trefflich Harnacks Ausdrucksweise bezeichnend.

Ich habe diesen Streit in Deutschland miterlebt und habe daran teilgenommen und muß erklären, daß die Art und Weise, wie die sogenannte moderne liberale Bibelkritik mit den Evangelien verfuhr, doch recht viele Theologen, die liberal gerichtet waren (ich gehörte diesen an), verletzen und abstoßen mußte. Professor D. H. J. Holtzmann in Straßburg, ein gefeierter Bibelkritiker, schreibt in seinem Hand-Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Seite 32. „Innerhalb der synoptischen Vorgeschichte selbst weisen die Genealogie, ferner einzelne stehen gebliebene Ausdrücke wie Eltern, Vater, Mutter und das ausdrücklich bezeugte: οὐ συνῆκαν τὸ ῥῆμα (und sie verstanden das Wort nicht, 2, 50) auf Abstammung aus der Ehe Josephs mit Maria." Ferner erklärt er und sucht es mit einem großen Ballast von gelehrten Darlegungen nachzuweisen, daß die Vorstellung von der Jungfraugeburt auf judenchristlichem Gebiet entstanden sei; als Frucht des theologischen Nachdenkens über Jes.

7, 14 (vergleiche Harnack, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, 87, 91) hätte sich aber nicht durchgeschlagen ohne die mächtig entgegenkommende, über die mannigfachsten Präformationen dazu verfügende, Disposition der griechisch-römischen Welt. Diese habe in ihren Mythen „Götterkinder" gehabt, wie zum Beispiel Danae, Melanippe, Auge und Antiope; ja sie habe sogar in geschichtlichen Persönlichkeiten, wie Pythagoras, Plato, Dionysius, Alexander, Seleukus, Augustus Abkömmlinge von Göttern gesehen. Sobald das Christentum daher auf griechischem Boden sich angesiedelt hatte, meint Holtzmann, wirkten solcherlei Vorstellungen kräftiger, wobei ihnen selbstverständlich die gröbere, die allzusinnliche Form abgestreift wurde. Eine noch genauere Analogie würde freilich der asiatische Osten mit der Jungfraugeburt des Buddha bieten. Der mehr volkstümlichen Einkleidung der Sache sei überdies die mehr theologisch bedingte Reflexion auf Präexistenz unmittelbar zur Seite getreten.

Die Darstellungen der Jungfraugeburt Jesu in den Evangelien des Matthäus und Lukas sind daher diesem Vertreter der sogenannten höheren Bibelkritik „liebliche Sagengewinde," womit die überströmende Verehrung und Liebe der ältesten Christenheit die Wiege ihres Herrn umkränzt hat, von welchen die eine demjenigen, welcher den andern Kranz geschlungen hat, bereits vorgelegen zu haben scheine (er weist zum Beweise hiefür auf Lukas 1, 30. 35 und 77 hin). Und drehe man das Prioritätsverhältnis um, so wachse nur die Möglichkeit, die ganze Vorgeschichte auf die schriftstellerische Kunst eines dichterisch angelegten Evangelisten zurückzuführen, wogegen als andre Möglichkeit die Benutzung einer judenchristlichen Quelle in Betracht komme. „Je mehr Bewunderung übrigens die dichterische Schönheit dieser Erzeugnisse altchristlicher Andacht verdienen und auch gefunden haben, desto weniger wird man ihrem Geist da gerecht, wo man sich abmüht, sie auf Kosten des Wunderdufts, den die Morgennebel der evangelischen Geschichte darauf getaut haben, in eine Prosa umzusetzen, welche immer gleich unwahrscheinlich klingen wird, mag man sie nun selbst wieder als Bericht über einen wunderbaren Tatbestand (wie die herkömmliche Apologetik tue) oder gar als konfuse Darstellung trivialer Alltäglichkeiten auffassen (wie der frühere Rationalismus getan)." Holtzmann a. a. O. S. 53.

Darnach ist also die Jungfraugeburt Jesu nichts anders als eine liebliche Sage, erdacht von einem dichterisch beanlagten Evangelisten nach dem Muster heidnischer Götterfabeln! Wer ist nun der dichterisch beanlagte Evangelist? Matthäus oder Lukas? Soweit ich diese beiden Evangelisten kenne: keiner von beiden! Sie zeigen beide keine Spur von dichterischer Beanlagung. Sie sind vom Heiligen Geist inspirierte Darsteller geschichtlicher Tatsachen.

Was Lukas betrifft, so stimme ich voll und ganz den Ausführungen eines hochgeachteten amerikanischen Gelehrten bei, die ich in seinem sehr wertvollen Buch finde: „A Scientific Man and the Bible." Darin beschäftigt er sich mit den Resultaten der modernen Bibelkritik, respektive mit den Eindrücken, die sie auf ihn gemacht hatten. Er schreibt Seite 28:

A destructive analysis of the Holy Scriptures called the Higher Criticism of the Bible imported from intellectual Germany, was sweeping England and our own America, seemed only too eager to fall into line. The effect of the criticism to knock out the one great prop of faith by subdividing the Bible into innumerable fragments or perhaps more literally by tearing it to pieces, while questioning its authenticity and challenging its authority on every page with the rejection of many vital parts as the myths of a nomadic people. Miracles were discredited because contrary to the laws of nature, and with them logically went the Virgin Birth of Christ, his Deity, his atoning Death, his resurrection and his present mediatorial office at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

Dieses Verfahren einer Gruppe von außerordentlich fähigen, oftmals persönlich reizender Männer und gewöhnlich in den Sprachen sehr erfahrener Lehrer erzeugte ein solches Gefühl der Unsicherheit, daß in vielen das Gefühl entstand, es gäbe keine Gewißheit mehr, daß, wenn immer und wo immer man die Bibel aufschlüge, um Geistesnahrung zu finden, man statt dessen nur Spreu finde. Eine weitere Folge war in den Kolleges wahrzunehmen, indem unsre jungen Männer (auch Theologen!) fürchteten, „unwissenschaftlich" oder „engherzig" genannt zu werden, wenn sie sich nicht zu den Resultaten der höheren Bibelkritik bekennen würden.

Dieser Mann bekennt sodann weiterhin, daß der „destructive criticism" nicht so leicht beiseite geschoben werden oder übergangen werden konnte, so daß die ernste Frage entstand: wie weit würde er gehen in der Verwerfung der Vergangenheit als wertlos und welche Methode würde die beste sein, einige ihrer in die Augen fallenden Irrtümer zu behandeln. Und dieser Mann, ein gebildeter Laie, unterzog sich der schweren Aufgabe, die Bibel, und zwar die ganze Bibel, in all ihren Teilen als Gotteswort zu verteidigen und ich glaube, er hat diese Aufgabe glänzend gelöst in zwei Aufsätzen: „How I came to my present faith" und „Why I believe the whole Bible ist true." Eingehend beschäftigt er sich in einem andern Essay mit der Frage der Jungfraugeburt Jesu und widerlegt alle gegen diese Argumente in überzeugendster, wissenschaftlicher Weise.

Dieser Gelehrte, Professor Howard Kelly, M. D., L. L. D., hat nach einer glänzenden Laufbahn als Professor der Gynäkologie an der Johns Hopkins-Universität und Arzt von weltweiter Reputation sich nun ins Privatleben zurückgezogen, um ungestört speziellen Forschungen sich zu widmen. Er ist im Besitz von akademischen Würden seitens mehrerer Universitäten und wurde von wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften in der ganzen zivilisierten Welt geehrt, ist Mitglied wissenschaftlicher Vereinigungen in Schottland, Irland, Italien, Deutschland, Frankreich, Rumänien und Rußland, und ist Verfasser von vielen wissenschaftlichen Artikeln in Fachzeitschriften und einiger Werke von anerkanntem Wert. Somit dürfen wir ihn begrüßen als einen würdigen, mutvollen Zeugen der Wahrheit von hoher Bedeutung.

Welche Bedeutung kann gegenüber den klaren Auslegungen eines solchen Bibelkenners, obschon er Laie ist, die Art und Weise haben, wie zum Beispiel der Theologieprofessor Reinhold Seeberg die Menschwerdung Christi und damit die Jungfraugeburt Jesu in seiner nun vollständig im Druck erschienen Dogmatik zu behandeln für gut findet. „Er hält dafür," wie Dr. Kamphausen in einer Kritik dieses Werkes anführt, „daß die Geburtsgeschichten (Matth. 1 und Lukas 1) nicht unbedingt diese Bedeutung haben, daß ihnen überhaupt keine für den Glauben wesentliche Bedeutung zukommt. Es könnte auch Joseph der leibliche Vater Jesu sein. Die wesentliche Sache sei die Verbindung des göttlichen Geistes mit dem Menschen Jesu; diese habe ihn vor jeglicher Sünde bewahrt." Demnach müßte man den Glaubenssatz: Ich glaube an Jesum Christum unsern Herrn, der empfangen ist vom Heiligen Geist, geboren von der Jungfrau Maria, konsequenter Weise einfach ausstreichen. Und somit tritt der genannte Professor einfach in die sehr ausgetretenen Pfade früherer Zeit. Von der wesensgleichen Gottheit Jesu Christi kann da keine Rede mehr sein. Jungfraugeburt und die Gottheit Christi sind unzertrennlich miteinander verbunden.

Professor Kelly schreibt, daß die für die Jungfraugeburt gebrauchten Stellen des Alten Testaments: Genesis 3, 15, Jesaias 7, 14 und Jeremias 31, 22 — weder deutlich, noch notwendig sich beziehen auf Christus als geboren von einem Weib oder einer Jungfrau mit Ausschluß eines irdischen Vaters; „aber im Augenblick, wo die Tatsache durch den Heiligen Geist geoffenbart ist, wird es sofort klar, daß die in diesen Stellen gebrauchte Ausdrucksweise eine solche Interpretation zuläßt und dadurch ihre volle Bedeutung gewinnt." Er meint damit die Stellen bei Matthäus 1, 18—23 und Lukas 1, 26—35. Genau aus dem griechischen Text übersetzt, lautet die Darstellung des Matthäus wie folgt: Des Christus Geburt war aber also: Als seine Mutter Maria dem Joseph verlobt war, wurde sie, bevor dieselbe noch zusammenkamen, erfunden

als schwanger seiend vom Heiligen Geist. Joseph aber, ihr Mann, indem er gerecht und nicht willens war, sie zu beschimpfen, entschloß sich heimlich, sie zu entlassen. Während er aber dem nachdachte, siehe da erschien ein Engel des Herrn ihm im Traum und sprach: Joseph, Sohn Davids, nicht mögest du dich scheuen, Maria, dein Weib, aufzunehmen; denn das in ihr Erzeugte ist (entstammt) aus heiligem Geist. Sie aber wird einen Sohn gebären, und du wirst seinen Sohn Jesus nennen, denn er wird sein Volk von ihren Sünden erretten. Das alles aber ist geschehen, auf das erfüllt sei das vom Herrn durch den Propheten Geredete, der sagt: „Siehe die Jungfrau wird schwanger sein und einen Sohn gebären, und sie werden nennen seinen Namen Emmanuel," was verdolmetscht ist: Mit uns (ist) Gott. Erwacht aber vom Schlaf, tat Joseph, wie ihm der Engel des Herrn aufgetragen hatte, und nahm sein Weib auf. Und er erkannte sie nicht, bis daß sie einen Sohn gebar, und er nannte seinen Namen Jesus.

Hierzu sei noch erläuternd bemerkt: Der Ausdruck „verlobt" war, μνηστευθείσης, deutet im Zusammenhang nur die feierliche, bei den Juden gebräuchliche Verlobung an, durch welche des Joseph Bedenken verständlich werde. Ferner bedeutet: „Bevor dieselben zusammenkamen" einfach zusammenwohnten, συνελθεῖν hier im Unterschied von οὐκ ἐγίγνωσκεν in Vers 25. — Durch den Zusatz: Joseph war gerecht, wird er als gesetzesstrenger Jude bezeichnet und sein weiteres Verhalten als für ihn geboten bemerkbar gemacht. — „Das alles aber ist geschehen," bezieht sich ebenso auf die Eröffnung des Engels über die Herkunft des Kindes der Maria, wie über dessen Bestimmung.

Ueberblicken wir nun noch einmal die ganze Darstellung des Matthäus von der Jungfraugeburt Jesu, so ergibt sich folgender Zusammenhang: Dem Nachweis der Abstammung Jesu aus dem Geschlecht der Verheißung läßt Matthäus sofort den Bericht über die Weise folgen, in welcher Gott selber die Wunderbarkeit seines menschlichen Werdens behufs Klarstellung seiner Messiaswürde vor Joseph verbürgte, dem es als Verlobten der Maria nahe lag, an Jesu Geburt Anstoß zu nehmen. Zu dem Ende zeichnet Matthäus zunächst (Vers 18 und 19) die Situation, indem er angibt, wie einerseits vor dem Beginn des ehelichen Zusammenlebens mit Joseph Marias Schwangerschaft bemerkbar wurde (Vers 18) und anderseits deshalb Joseph aus Zweifel an der Lauterkeit seiner Verlobten vorhatte, diese, wenn auch nicht gerade als Sünderin öffentlich bloßzustellen (5. Mose 22. 23), so doch mittels eines nach jeder feierlichen Verlobung gebotenen Scheines (5. Mose 24, 1) zu entlassen (Vers 19). Erst dann (Vers 20—22) beschreibt er umständlich, wie der bedenkliche Joseph mittels eines ihm von Gott gesandten Traumgesichtes über den heiligen Ursprung des Zustandes der

Maria und den messianischen Beruf ihres zu erwartenden Sohnes, ein Erretter seines Volkes von dessen Sündenschuld zu werden, unterrichtet, und zugleich angewiesen wurde, ihm den entsprechenden Jesusnamen beizulegen. Weil dem Matthäus allein der damit bekundete Ursprung des Kindes von entscheidender Bedeutung ist, berichtet er, ohne der Geburt selber weiter zu gedenken, auch nur von der Befolgung jener göttlichen Weisung durch Joseph, den in den Augen Israels legitimen Vater Jesu. Hingegen schaltet er nach der Mitteilung der Ankündigung des übernatürlichen Ursprungs des Kindes der Maria einen Hinweis darauf ein, daß in der damit gesetzten Geburt aus einer Jungfrau die genaue Erfüllung jener Verheißung liege, die dem davidischen Geschlecht über die Person dessen, der es zu neuem Glanz erheben sollte, bereits durch Jesaja (7, 14) gegeben worden war. (Vergleiche Nösgen, Kommentar). Damit hat aber Matthäus zugleich bewiesen, daß Gottes in der ganzen Geschlechtsabfolge vorbereiteter und zuvor verkündigter Heilsratschluß bezüglich des Eintritts des Sünderheilands in die Welt durch göttliches Eingreifen mitten in der Zeit des Herabsinkens des davidischen Geschlechtes zu immer größerer Geringheit zur Verwirklichung gelangt ist.

Indem nun das Evangelium Matthäi die Erfüllung der Weissagung Jesaja 7, 14 in der dem Joseph zuteilgewordenen Offenbarung über den übernatürlichen Ursprung des Kleides der Maria einflicht, sollte an der Messianität jener Stelle bei Jesaja eigentlich kein Zweifel bestehen. Professor Kelly erblickt deshalb hierin einen Beleg für die Jungfrauengeburt Jesu in dem Alten Testament. Und so wird jeder Christ tun, der an die göttliche Inspiration und an die Echtheit des Matthäusevangeliums glaubt.

Das Matthäusevangelium ist eines der vier Evangelien der Bibel und es ist evangelischer Glaube, daß die Heilige Schrift ist geschrieben auf Antrieb und Erleuchtung des Heiligen Geistes, also Gottes Wort ist. Und Petrus schreibt 2. Petri 1, 21. Es ist noch nie eine Weissagung aus menschlichem Willen hervorgebracht, sondern die heiligen Menschen Gottes haben geredet, getrieben von dem Heiligen Geist.

Die „höhere Bibelkritik" will aber dieses erste Kapitel des Matthäusevangeliums als nicht zu diesem Evangelium gehörend, als eine Einschiebung betrachtet haben. Wir müssen uns hiermit etwas beschäftigen.

Dr. Charles Jefferson, Pastor am Broadway Tabernacle, New York, behauptet: Die Jungfrauengeburt ist in keinem Buch des Neuen Testaments erwähnt mit Ausnahme der Evangelien von Matthäus und Lukas. Keines von diesen ist von einem Apostel geschrieben, meint er. Der Apostel Matthäus habe der Ueberlie-

ferung gemäß einige von den Lehren Jesu („sayings of Jesus") niedergeschrieben und sein kleines Buch wäre bekannt als „The Logia." Man glaube, daß die „Logia" sich in diesem ersten Evangelium befinden, aber das Buch selbst sei eine Kompilation. Dann ruft er aus: Wer schrieb die zwei ersten Kapitel des ersten Evangeliums? und antwortet: Niemand weiß es — niemand wird es jemals wissen. Das dritte Evangelium sei von einem Heiden aus Antiochien geschrieben worden, der nach Palästina gekommen — wann? wußten wir nicht —, um Material für ein Buch zu sammeln das er für einen vertrauten Freund schreiben wollte. Er habe die Dinge gesammelt, welche er von den Christen Palästinas geglaubt fand. Und er schließt seine Beweisführung, wenn man sie so nennen darf, mit den Worten: „Dies sind die zwei einzigen Bücher von den 27 Büchern des Neuen Testaments, welche die ganz unbedeutende Beziehung auf die Jungfrauengeburt enthalten."

Hierauf ist zu erwidern, daß die bedeutendsten Bibelforscher nicht bloß der Vergangenheit, sondern auch der Gegenwart die Originalität, Unverfälschtheit und Glaubwürdigkeit der beiden in Frage stehenden Evangelien festhalten und beweisen; letztere haben zudem alle von den Gegnern vorgebrachten Einwürfe schlagend widerlegt. Das Resultat der sorgfältigsten und eingehendsten objektiven Bibelforschung ist:

1. Mit bewundernswerter Einmütigkeit schreibt das christliche Altertum das erste Evangelium dem Apostel Matthäus zu.

2. Das dem Matthäus zugeschriebene Evangelium stellt sich als Originalarbeit in griechischer Sprache dar. Die ursprünglich griechische Abfassung des Evangeliums erhellt aus der einheitlichen Sprache des Evangeliums selber. In den beanstandeten zwei ersten Kapiteln findet sich durchaus die dem ganzen Evangelium eigne Sprach- und Ausdrucksweise.

3. Es ist kein direkter Zusammenhang zwischen der von Papias erwähnten Schrift, die er λόγια nannte, das heißt Reden, und dem kanonischen Matthäusevangelium vorhanden. Dagegen ist ein mittelbarer Zusammenhang zwischen der bei Papias erwähnten hebräischen Logiasammlung des Matthäus und des ersten Evangeliums wahrscheinlich.

4. Es ist Tatsache, daß die beanstandeten zwei ersten Kapitel des Evangeliums in allen Handschriften sich finden, und daß es keine Bibelhandschrift ohne diese beiden Kapitel gibt.

Professor J. P. Lange schreibt hierüber: Man könnte ebenso gut das Haupt von seinem Körper ablösen, als diese Basis des ganzen Evangeliums von den folgenden Kapiteln. Die Zweifel gehören einer Zeit an, die kaum eine Ahnung von den eigentümlichen Grundgedanken und dem organischen Zusammenhang der

Evangelien hatte. Siehe Kommentar I. 3. Und jetzt werden diese Zweifel als „höhere Bibelkritik" wiederholt!

Was Jefferson über das Evangelium des Lukas sagt, ist sehr oberflächlich, mag aber die Glaubwürdigkeit desselben herabzuwürdigen sehr geeignet sein. Hätte er nur die Vorrede des Lukas zu seinem Evangelium geziemend beachtet, so hätte er zu einem andern Urteil kommen müssen. Lukas, ein gebildeter Heidenchrist, war ein Arzt, wie Professor Kelly richtig bemerkt:

A true scientist, saturated with the spirit of his profession, careful and accurate as an investigator, and fully cognizant of the vital importance of the facts he was about to relate. He gives us, I believe, in his first forty-two words in the Greek, eighty-two in the English (siebenzig im Deutschen) without the slightest observable effort, the largest quantum of certainty and assurance ever expressed in equal compass in any language.

Ja, wo ist ein profaner Schriftsteller, der von sich bekennen konnte, mit solcher Sorgfalt sein Material gesammelt und gesichtet zu haben, wie Lukas von sich bekennt? Und doch will man ihm nicht glauben, seine Darstellung von der Kindheit und Jugendgeschichte Jesu verwerfen! Verweilen wir einen Augenblick bei dem durch seine Schlichtheit und präzise Kürze sich auszeichnendem **Vorwort**, worin er beim Beginn seiner Arbeit dem Leser den Schlüssel zu deren richtiger Auffassung reicht. „Nachdem nun einmal viele versucht haben, eine Erzählung der unter uns (Christen) vollbeglaubigten Tatsachen aufzusetzen, so wie es uns die überlieferten, welche von Anfang an Augenzeugen waren (nämlich die Apostel) und Diener des Wortes geworden sind, schien es auch mir, da ich von vorne an (das heißt vom ersten Anfang an) allem sorgfältig nachgeforscht habe, gut, es dir, geschätzester Theophilus, geordnet mitzuteilen, damit du die Gewißheit der Lehren, über welche du Unterricht empfingst, erkennen mögest."

Dem Theophilus waren also Darstellungen der unter den Christen vollgeglaubten Tatsachen bekannt und Lukas gibt hier an, worin der Vorzug seiner Schrift vor diesen und andern Darstellungen bestehe. Gemeinsam ist ihm mit jenen Vorgängen die Quelle, aus der die Berichte über die einzelnen Tatsachen geschöpft sind, nämlich die Mitteilungen der „Augenzeugen des Wirkens Jesu von Anfang an (vergleiche Apg. 1, 21. 22), die als solche auch Diener des Wortes (Apg. 9. 8 und 26, 16) geworden sind. Diese unmittelbare Ueberlieferung der ersten Zeugen kann, weil sie ausdrücklich von den schriftstellerischen Versuchen jener Vielen (πολλοί) unterschieden wird, nur eine mündliche gewesen sein. Den Vorzug seiner Arbeit sieht der Evangelist vor allem in seiner Vorbereitung und Ausrüstung zu derselben. Nur darum ist es ihm gut erschienen, sie anzufertigen, weil er bereits früher allen Tatsachen von Anfang

an nachgegangen war und allem Ueberlieferten genau nachgeforscht hatte. Das hebt Lukas offenbar nicht nur in Rücksicht auf manche Abweichungen seiner Darstellung hervor, sondern besonders auch im Blick auf solche Nachrichten, welche, wie gerade die in Kapitel 1 und 2 mitgeteilten, zuvor in weiteren Kreisen noch nicht bekannt geworden waren. Und es steht absolut nichts der Annahme entgegen, daß Maria selber ihm Mitteilungen gemacht hat, respektive daß Lukas sich von ihr unterrichten ließ, da sie ja wohl zu dieser Zeit noch lebte. Angesichts dieser Tatsachen schreibt Professor Kelly:

Where, I submit, in the world, can one find more simply and naturally stated a greater and more justifiable assurance, as well as more competent testimony, in a matter exceeding all other earthly interests in importance! (Page 88).

EDITORIALS

THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY AT CLEVELAND

The second week of May was the time when the friends of international peace were met in the great metropolis on Lake Erie. The American Peace Society celebrated the centennial of its existence. The city of Cleveland had been selected for the observance of this occasion because the president of that organization, former United States Senator Hon. Theodore E. Burton, resides here. Mr. Burton is not only the formal head of that body, but has for many years been one of the foremost promoters of the Peace movement. He is an old man, nearly 75 years of age, but although looking his age, is still robust in body and strong in voice, and, besides, so well informed on national and international questions and in touch with the leading personalities that he made on ideal presiding officer.

On the Sunday preceding the official sessions, he spoke in Trinity Cathedral on the history of the Peace Society, mentioning many men of national fame, who had been its presidents or supporters in the past. One statement he made proved somewhat disappointing to us. He said the Society had as a rule worked in *harmony with the United States government.* They had protested against the war with Mexico (in 1847), but not at the outbreak of the Civil War nor at the beginning of the war with the Central Powers. He did not say whether they had done anything to keep America from entering the war, while the conflict was still confined to Europe. They certainly did not do anything to keep Wilson from unleashing the dogs of war early in 1917. We imagine they succumbed equally to the war psychosis that seized upon nearly everybody else.

It was significant that the sessions of the Society had their preliminaries in a church. It was plain that the leaders were anxious to get the sanction of the religious forces of the country; that they felt their aims were so idealistic that they could not hope for success without the cooperation of that institution which is built on the gospel of the Prince of peace. Moreover, every session throughout the Centennial was opened by prayer. These prayers were offered by the ministers of the leading churches of the city, not excepting the Catholic bishop (Schrembs) and the Jewish rabbis. By the way, the Evangelical Synod was overlooked in this lining up of the clergymen of Cleveland; its ministers seem to have too little prominence to be considered.

To the many diplomats from abroad it must have seemed strange that our country is still so old-fashioned as to employ the services of ministers of the gospel in political meetings.

At the first regular session, on Monday, May 7th in the afternoon, an opportunity was given to the educated youth of the country to express itself on the peace question, in the "Ohio Intercollegiate Oratorical Contest." Those who had expected from these no more than the ordinary peace orations of college boys, had the surprise of their lives. Four of the five delivered themselves of opinions that must have made the ears of many listeners tingle. Not only was militarism denounced in the strongest terms, but the baneful role that propaganda played in the last war was chastized without mercy. The lies about the Central Powers, the "atrocities" that were served up to the American public, the hollowness of the spiritual ideals, about which Mr. Wilson (and the "Federal Council") prated so glibly then, received the most caustic comment.

The local papers, on the next day, had big head-lines about the "Revolt of Youth." Unfortunately, however, they printed little of the detail, of the startling things that had been said; thereby withholding from the public the spicy heresies into which youth has been falling. It may be said in general that the press did not rise to the occasion. The papers did not cover the meetings satisfactorily. The speeches were reported in a most meager fashion, and the spirits of the writers did not warm up to the great subject that was up for discussion. If the work of the press had been done with the vim and color and fulness that is given to a great prize-fight, the heart of Cleveland would have melted from the moral heat that could have been produced.

At the evening session on Monday we heard the ambassadors from England, France and Germany. As speakers all three made a poor showing. The French ambassador (as "a poet of note" he was introduced) spoke such wretched English that he could not be understood. But he was sure that the peace ideal had been invested with such vitality that it could not be buried again. The Englishman, Sir Esme Howard, expressed his country's sincere desire for peace. The pity is, he said, that there is a dramatic element in any conflict, from a dog fight to a World War, to which human nature yields only too readily. If war could be stripped of its romantic glamor and constructive peace work could be made equally fascinating, much would be gained. The representative of Germany, Baron von Prittwitz, who as a platform speaker has not achieved much ease of manner as yet, stated that he had only a day or two before signed Germany's acceptance of the Kellogg War-outlawry proposal. That England and Germany are sincere in their

protestation of peace sentiments, can be well believed; for England has all it can reasonably desire, and Germany is not in a position to wage successful war. Moreover, the German government is dependent on the support of the masses, and the laboring men hate war.

The last speaker was Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, the famous explorer and still more famous through his work for the release of the Siberian prisoners of war and the famine sufferers of Russia. He was by far the most effective speaker of the four. With great boldness he stripped the mask of sanctimonious idealism from the face of modern diplomacy, claiming that the nations had by no means learned that common morality is just as binding and as workable a rule between nations as it is between individuals. Many a person in the audience moved nervously in their seats as N. went along, expecting some kind of a sensation every movement. Nothing happened though, and when the speaker began to describe his experiences with the Siberian war prisoners and the victims of the famine in Russia, they felt that this was indeed an effective argument for peace but that at least a break on the platform had been averted.

We can not, of course, report the Peace Conference in full. Many times the ordinary hearer, who has learned nothing since 1919, received a nervous shock. So, for instance, when a chaplain of the American Legion said that "the boys" here had been fed with lies about the German soldiers—they were Huns, criminals, imps of Satan—but that when they came to Europe they found they were just as good as the American soldiers; that if they had known this they would never have gone over to fight them and much blood and treasure could have been spared. Fancy this coming from such a source! We have been reading "What the War did to my mind," in the "Christian Century," e. g. what it did to Fosdick and Hough (Detroit). These men have told us it caused them to take "long thoughts." They were not half as long as this chaplain's. Hough, especially, the author of the "Sword of the *Lord,*" was "fiercely loyal" to the Allied cause, he tells us, and Barnes's articles left him cold. He had a closed mind in the first place, and the War could never pry it open. Not so this chaplain.

There was some "heckling" in a number of meetings. Particularly when Milyukof, the Russian foreign secretary under Kerensky, spoke. Sympathizers of the Soviet regime, in the audience, protested. In our opinion quite justly, for Milyukof was entirely out of place in the gathering: he represented nothing but himself. Still the hecklers were summarily ejected; the lady hearers strongly resented the impudence of "these Bolshevists."

The most interesting feature of the Conference were the noonday luncheons. They were more intimate in nature and more candid in the admission of shortcomings. At the Wednesday luncheon Ex-governor Sweet of Colorado gave a most impressive talk. He said, we all hate war now and are fervent for peace because the evil of the last war is still fresh in our minds. But how will it be when time has effaced these memories, when our youth will succeed to leadership? To perpetuate the will to peace, he suggested, three institutions will have to do educational work: the home, the schools, and the church. The church more particularly, he said with great emphasis, for *the church more than any other agency was responsible for the war madness and bitterness:* The state preached war because it seemed necessary; the church preached war because it was a *holy* thing, it was a crusade, it was the sword of the "Lord" (Hough). And then one more thing, he said in conclusion: We must compel the press to say the truth.

The Peace Conference doubtless strengthened the peace sentiment of those who took part, and the many commissions that studied the different phases of the question (industry, justice, education, religion, social agencies and their respective international implications) must have done good work and will, we hope, do so in the future. Not a single word, however, did we hear about the undoing of the evils and injustices done by the peace treaties; not one word about the revision of these treaties inspired by revenge and carried out by force. It is a step forward to see that war in general is a thing from below and not from above. But it is a better thing to stop at this concrete case and make restitution as far as this is possible.

CHURCH UNION

Rev. H. Kamphausen, D.D.,
Editor Evangelical Theological Magazine,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Brother:

I want to thank you for your timely and clear editorial on Church Union in the March issue of The Evangelical Theological Magazine, also Rev. R. Niebuhr for his challenging words on the same subject in a previous issue.

Everywhere throughout the Synod there are expressions and even movements toward Church unity. Our great principle of "unity" seems to be taking definite active form. Thank God for that!

Not only has the subject been favorably mentioned and a commission on Church Union demanded at the last General Confer-

ence, but District Conferences are passing definite resolutions on Church Union. About four years ago the Wisconsin District appointed a committee to interview the Lutherans regarding a possible merger. Two years ago our baby District—"a little child shall lead them"—the Southern, passed a resolution asking our Synodical officers to give the subject of Church Union their active attention. The same resolution was passed by the national Brotherhood Convention at Buffalo. Last year Church union was made the theme of the Missouri Conference ("The heart of the Synod"), Dr. A. H. Becker speaking on the subject. And now comes Eden Theological Seminary with a convocation the latter part of this month at which Church Union is to be discussed by Dr. G. Richards, Chairman of the Commission on Church Union of the Reformed Church, U. S. A.

On my many travels I find "Church Union" is being discussed by our pastors everywhere. I am again and again asked what our pastors and people in other parts of the Synod are saying on this vital question. Everywhere I find folks saying, "We ought to unite with some other denomination."

At Baltimore and Buffalo, I understand, our pastors are meeting with the Reformed pastors on this subject. This is a very practical method of seriously dealing with the subject. By association we best learn to know folks. This makes for fellowship and friendship. This is how young folks come to marriage. Perhaps, if this practical example of our Baltimore and Buffalo pastors were followed elsewhere and by the officials of both groups a marriage here would also result.

You have correctly said that a merger with the Lutherans of any kind is impossible. That would mean submergence for the Evangelical Synod. If any one doubts this, let him approach even the United Lutheran as you did. The above mentioned Wisconsin District Committee of four years ago had the same experience. Or let doubters read the article by Dr. Krumbine on "How Lutheranism Lapsed from Liberalism," in your March issue of the Evangelical Magazine, especially the last sentence. No, to unite with the Lutherans is out of question. It would mean submergence.

While we have a number of "Lutherans" in our Synod, people and especially pastors who claim to be "Lutheran" in doctrine and sentiment or by early training, the fact that they did not join Lutheran Synods proves they could not personally unite with any Lutheran Church in *America,* and yet there are over twenty shades or groups to choose from. The "Lutherans" in our Synod are not Lutherans of the American type. American Lutheranism and German Lutheranism are different.

But we have a very large number of Reformed or Calvinistic in our Synod who, like you, "could get along with, and even in, the Reformed Church." This Church like ours is of German extraction, children of the Reformation, evangelical in doctrine, with a strong social emphasis, stressing religious education and upholding confirmation. The form of service is also like unto ours. With all this likeness and kinship why couldn't we "get along with the Reformed Church"? And do we not in our Article of Faith say, we accept the Symbolical books of the Reformed Church?

Since the door to the Lutheran Church is closed to us, why not then turn to the Reformed Church in the United States?

Such a merger does not mean *giving up,* but *gaining* in power and prestige, in efficiency and effectiveness for the Kingdom. It would mean greater good from the same efforts. United efforts always multiply results. Five men singly could never lift a 500-pound bale of cotton, but five men together can easily. Together the Evangelical Synod and the Reformed Church could accomplish much more for the Kingdom than we are now doing separately. Surely that should be our concern. Everywhere human hearts are crying for spiritual help, millions are yet without the only Christ. Shall we not take every means of united efforts to reach a greater number of these needy, sin-sick souls? What loss of greater good this separated service! Two working together means much more than twice two. Here is the great argument for union of kindred forces,—the greater good accomplished. This is real Christian strategy and Church statemanship.

Or consider it from the standpoint of economy and wastefulness and you come to the same conclusion of *the great good and usefulness resulting from Union.*

What two men are now doing at double the expense in two denominations, could in most cases—not in all—be done by one. This would mean the release of one man and the corresponding costs for other services. Instead of each denomination having an Executive Secretary for Men, Women, Young People, Religious Education, Home Missions, Foreign Missions, Editors for their Church Papers and Periodicals, one in many cases could do the work. What a saving of men and money for greater, more extended services, reaching larger number of God's unsaved children the world over. Yes, it would mean one President General less. Why all this waste? Does not Christian Stewardship also demand Church Union? How can we commit so great a sin, wasting men and money in the service of the Kingdom.

It will not mean giving less, but doing greater good, reaching more with what we give. Indeed it would mean more giving. Co-operation and united efforts with larger results always does. The United Church of Canada has larger receipts now than the three merged churches had. Some folks will simply not support wasteful methods.

A Union with the Reformed Church would also prevent overlapping and overlooking. Instead of an Evangelical and a Reformed Church, in many places, *one* "United Evangelical" would be sufficient. We do not, of course, mean, that wherever there are now an Evangelical and a Reformed Church in the same town or section of the City, they would merge. Many would, if not at once, eventually. But a Union would prevent both our Synod and the Reformed Church, each planting a Church in the same vicinity, as that is now possible. This unchristian competition would be eliminated. What a disgrace as well as waste this competitive denominational Church building is. There would be one denomination less, thank God!

With the released men and money many of the crying needs at home and abroad need no longer be overlooked. Now we must say to these repeated calls; We have neither men nor money.

Then as Dr. H. R. Niebuhr pointed out to me in a conversation on this subject, our educational institutions would complement one another. Most of the schools of the Reformed Church are in the East, excepting one in Ohio and one in Wisconsin. Ours are in the middle West. Our students in the East would have schools near at hand. Their folks in the middle West would have institutions close by. Indeed it might be possible here also to merge and save men and money. All this is another strong argument for merger.

But, dear Editor, I am writing more than I intended, I merely wished to commend you for discussing this vital and timely question in the magazine. Others may point out many more reasons for merger and how it may be brought about. There are few, if any reasons against a merger, except unwilling ones. Or as was reported in the case of the failure of two other groups to unite some years ago. The reporter said, "There were only eighteen reasons against merger." When asked to name these, reply "Eighteen Bishops."

As to name, why not simply write the names also; "The Evangelical Reformed Church."

Yours for Church Union,

H. L. Streich, Executive Sec.

„Der Geist wehet, wo er will."

An der Stelle, woraus dies Wort genommen ist, heißt es: Der **Wind** wehet . . . . Der Wind wird aber dort vom Herrn gebraucht, um das Wesen des Geistes zu erklären, wie denn auch in demselben Verse (Joh. 3, 8) im zweiten Teil dasselbe Wort (πνεῦμα) für den Geist steht. Daraus erheben wir das Recht, das Wort des Herrn in obiger Weise umzuwandeln. In jenem Nachtgespräch betont der Herr mit großem Nachdruck die Notwendigkeit der Wiedergeburt und die Tatsache, daß solche Wiedergeburt ein Werk des Geistes sei. Nikodemus findet sich alsbald in einer Welt der Rätsel. Er weiß ebenso wenig mit der Wiedergeburt als mit dem Geist etwas anzufangen. Die Religion war ihm eine Sache der Institutionen. Sie begann und endete mit Israel, jenseits war Heidentum, Götzendienst. Israel aber hatte seinen Tempel, seine heiligen Schriften, seine Geschichte, seine Priester, sein Gesetz. Dies alles verbürgte die Korrektheit und Gültigkeit seines religiösen Besitzes. Nun redet dieser „Meister" von Wiedergeburt, von dem freien Walten des Geistes und gar nichts von den Dingen, welche ihm bisher das „sine quā non" seines Glaubens gewesen waren.

Die Zeit kam, wo die Volksgenossen des Nikodemus vor derselben Paradoxie standen, aber nicht wie er mit der Willigkeit, sich belehren zu lassen. Die Haltung dieses Jesus war ihnen ein „skandalon," über das sie nicht hinauskonnten. „Dieser Mann lehret gegen Moses und das Gesetz," hieß es. „Hinweg mit ihm!"

Die Reformatoren stießen mit demselben harten, unbeugsamen Institutionsglauben zusammen. Luther fand, daß das Herz des christlichen Glaubens eine persönliche, beseligende Erfahrung sei, an dem Evangelium gemacht, von Kirche und Priestertum nicht direkt abhängig. Er ging in die Welt hinaus und verkündete dies von Gottes freier Gnade allein abhängige Evangelium. Der Welt schien es ein neuer, frischer, froher Klang von oben her, aber die Kirche exkommunizierte ihn und übergab ihn dem Teufel und seinen Engeln. Jedoch sie konnte das Zustandekommen und den Bestand einer Kirche des Protestantismus nicht hindern.

Wenn so Jesus wie die Reformatoren das freie Walten des Geistes für eine große Lebenswahrheit erklären, so ist nicht zu verwundern, daß innerhalb des Protestantismus sich je und je die Opposition gegen alles Traditionelle und Institutionelle geregt hat und noch regt. Besonders unsre mit Kritik und Skepsis stark geschwängerte Zeit läßt diesen Zug hervortreten. Vor zwei Jahren schrieb F. G. Peabody sein Buch: „The Church of the Spirit." Darin versuchte er zu zeigen, daß aller Fortschritt nicht nur in der Lehre der Kirche, sondern auch in ihrem Leben und ihren Werken gewöhnlich den freien Geistern zu danken gewesen sei, die von

ihrer Zeit als Ketzer und Abtrünnige bezeichnet wurden, und daß die Kirche durch Bekämpfung und Ertötung ihrer besten, weil freiesten, Glieder ein schlimmes Schuldkonto gegen sich habe auflaufen lassen. Solcher Bücher und Stimmen gibt es heute viele.

Die organisierte Kirche ist mit dem herrschenden System des Kapitalismus und der Industrie so verquickt gewesen, daß Millionen ihr den Rücken gekehrt haben. So hat sie auch in dem letzten Krieg, worin es sich wesentlich um die ökonomische Vorherrschaft der Völker handelte, eine so traurige Rolle gespielt, daß die Heiden sich von ihr wenden. Sie sagen: Gebt uns Christus! Die Kirche wollen wir nicht.

Zu alldem findet sich die Kirche von der alles beherrschenden Naturwissenschaft so bedrängt, daß selbst ihre Freunde sich aufs höchste beunruhigt fühlen. Nicht nur ihre Theologie, sondern ihre fundamentalsten Glaubenssätze werden in Zweifel gezogen. Wie die Rothäute von den andrängenden Weißen auf ein immer kleiner werdendes Terrain beschränkt wurden, so muß die Kirche ein Stück ihres Glaubensgebietes nach dem andern dahingeben. Steht die Sache nicht bedenklich, wenn selbst Professoren der Theologie in kürzlichen Veröffentlichungen Bedenken äußern, ob man den theistischen Glauben aufrechthalten könnte? Oder wenn sie sagen, daß der moderne Theologe die Bibel nicht mehr als Norm und Lehrquelle ansähe, daß er von der Naturwissenschaft einen mehr adequaten Gottesbegriff erwarte, als den des Glaubensbekenntnisses?

Es ist offensichtlich, daß man mit dem Prinzip des „frei waltenden Geistes" allein ins Wolkenkuckucksheim gelangt. Das Pendel schwingt an manchen Orten wieder nach der andern Richtung. In Deutschland waren Sozialisten auf der einen Seite und liberale Theologen auf der andern Seite mit der Kirche fertig. Je reifer ein Christ werde, so sagte einer dieser freien Geister, um so mehr emanzipiere er sich von der Kirche. Jetzt aber hört man ganz andre Töne. Dibelius prophezeit frohen Glaubens ein „Jahrhundert der Kirche." Die christlichen Eltern stellen sich millionenweis in die Reihen im Kampf für die christlche Schule. Karl Barth ruft einem kulturseligen Geschlecht es stark ins Gemüt, daß Hilfe nur von dem Gott, den wir mit unserm Wissen und Können und mit unserm Erleben nie erreichen, kommen muß.

In England war die Sache von jeher anders. Von dort kam freilich die große Theorie der Evolution, um sich dann siegreich England und unser Land zu unterwerfen. Aber die Kirche hatte in dem konservativen Charakter des Engländers immer einen festeren Ankergrund als bei den Deutschen. Der mit starkem Wirklichkeitssinn belastete englische Geist verliert sich nicht leicht im Aether der Spekulation. Er weiß, daß man gut tut, an dem

historisch Gewordenen sich zu halten und nur bedächtig die bessernde Hand anzulegen.

Die „Kirche von England" geht in ihrer Wertlegung des Institutionellen, der Tradition, des historisch zu Behauptenden bis an die äußerste Grenze. Ihr war schon immer die Autorität der Kirche von der authentischen Abfolge ihrer Diener von den Aposteln her abhängig. Nicht Geist und Glaube entschied über das Wesen einer Kirche, sondern historischer Zusammenhang. Auch war der äußere Kultus bei ihr immer von mehr Belang als die Lehre. Es kann einer in der englischen Kirche sehr modernistisch in der Lehre sein, wenn er nur stark ritualistisch eingestellt ist. Neuerdings wird die Wertlegung auf das Sakramentale, die „Verdinglichung" des religiösen Glaubens, das Zeremonielle, das äußere pompöse Gewand des kirchlichen Betriebes so ins Extrem getrieben, daß man fühlt, hier ist ein andrer Geist, hier geht es mit Riesenschritten auf Rom hinaus.

Wie steht es bei uns? Der amerikanische Protestantismus strebt nach dem großen Ziel der Kircheneinheit; das Denominationelle wird als eine Schranke empfunden, die niedergelegt werden muß. Der geeinigte Protestantismus soll dann die Welt mit dem Geist Christi durchdringen. Diesem großen sozialen Zweck soll auch die Kirchenvereinigung dienen. Dem gegenüber ist der Streit der theologischen Meinungen von wenig Wichtigkeit, so sagt man. Diskussionen über Modernismus und Fundamentalismus werden nach Möglichkeit unterdrückt (siehe bei der Generalkonferenz der Methodisten in Kansas City den Antrag, die Seminarien daraufhin zu untersuchen: im Komitee begraben). Es heißt, die Hauptsache sei doch, daß man Geist und Gesinnung Jesu habe, von Dogmen werde niemand selig, und das Bekenntnis des Wandels sei wichtiger als das des Mundes.

Ja wohl, aber lebt der Glaube nicht mehr von **Tatsachen, Heilstatsachen?** Zu dem Heiland der Modernen kann man nicht beten, er ist bloß ein Prophet, eine geistgesalbte Persönlichkeit. Das war Luther auch und Kalvin und Wesley. Ist sein Tod bloß ein Akt des Bekenners, ein Martyrium, oder ist er die Begründung unsers Heils? Ist seine Auferstehung das Fundament der Kirche, oder ist darunter bloß zu verstehen, daß **die Sache Jesu** lebt? Hier handelt es sich nicht um Dogmen, die sich der sich freischwingende Geist so oder so auslegen kann: hier scheiden sich die Wege. Wollte die Kirche dies aufgeben, so wäre sie nicht mehr die Kirche der Apostel.

Die Kirchen, die sich auf etwas Festes gegründet haben, haben trotz aller Mängel mehr Haltbarkeit und Anziehungskraft gezeigt, als die, welche die Freiheit des Geistes auf ihr Panier geschrieben haben. Das gilt nicht nur von den Katholiken, auch von den Konservativen im Protestantismus. Die Lutheraner unser Landes

haben mit ihrem „Changeleß Chriſt“ mehr kirchenbauende Arbeit getan, als die Unitarier mit ihrem „Man is saved by character, not by faith,“ oder die Liberalen Deutſchlands mit ihrer „intellektuellen Integrität.“ Und der Paſtor, der ſeine Kinder an die feſte Regel einer Hausandacht bindet, erreicht mehr, als der, der das religiöſe Leben ſeiner Familie dem Einfluß des freiwaltenden Geiſtes überläßt.

Der Geiſt wehet freilich, wo er will, aber durchaus nicht regellos. Er hat ſich an beſtimmte Mittel und Formen gebunden. Dieſe Gnadenmittel ſoll man treulich benutzen, ſonſt zerfließt einem der Inhalt, oder im beſten Fall verſchwindet der Glaube in vager Myſtik.

The Christian World

Divorce and Remarriage

I have read with interest Dr. Spencer B. Meeser's article in the November-December *Review* and appreciate highly his purpose to dignify the marriage relation and prevent divorce. Many of his practical suggestions are most timely. However, in his utter exclusion of the remarriage of divorced persons under any circumstances from Christian sanction and his practical relegation of divorce itself to the realm of Mosaic or even pagan practice, I feel that his logic limps and his conclusion is not warranted.

First. Doctor Meeser seems to proceed on the assumption that when Jesus talked about marriage and divorce he was dictating Christian legislation for civic states in all time. That the Master's teachings are final authority I do not for a moment question, but I do not believe that he was in any wise dictating legal enactments for the regulation of society in the twentieth century when he spoke on this subject. Certainly he was not when he said that the adulterous look was the spiritual equivalent of the overt act. If we are going to be literalists in the interpretation of Jesus we must enact laws for the punishment of impure thoughts, and call the lustful look an indictable offense. It was precisely this literalistic type of mind which the Master encountered in the religionists of his day, and which prompted him to say, "The letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life." Protestantism has been a protest against the view that Jesus taught by precept rather than by principle. On this ground it has rejected the claim that Jesus and his apostles left a precise form of church government or that he required conformity in the administration of the sacraments or in a hundred other things in which we maintain that the Spirit-guided intelligence of the church must work out its best interpretations.

When we study the sayings of the Master as expressions of principle we discover his intense hostility to all loose handling of the marriage relation, and his utter aversion to any use of it in the interest of licentiousness. Here we can agree entirely with Professor Meeser. But when it comes to saying that in the few words of Jesus, which are not synoptic repetitions, he spoke his whole mind on the subject of legal regulation of marriage in Christian states for all time, then we utterly dissent. For not only did Jesus insist on the sanctity of the marriage relation, but he also insisted that all legal enactment must be genuinely humane. "The Sabbath was made for man," he said to those who thought more of the institution than they did of humanity. Can we then imagine the Master in this day saying that under no circumstances whatever could he approve any divorce, and branding some of the purest people we know as adulterers because, with no lustful thought whatever, they had escaped from an

intolerable state worse than an inferno and had brought themselves and their children into domestic relations which were strong and sweet and beautiful? When a woman marries a man who becomes a human tiger, treats her with utter cruelty and threatened murder, pollutes the domestic atmosphere with the ravings of an intoxicated brain, blasts the health and morals of his children as far as he is able, and yet may not have committed any known act of overt adultery—if she divorce him and rescue her children; if years after there comes into her life a man of noble Christian character who will give to her and her children all the beauty of a Christian home which she missed before, must we say that such a man and such a woman are living in adultery and that Jesus has cast them out as gross violators of his law? That he does not do so is proven by their Christian experience of his indwelling, and by the social evidences that they are walking in his ways. Surely to say otherwise is to be as pharisaic and legalistic as were the Jews of old.

Second. The argument for the indissolubility of the marriage bond from the analogy of parent and child does not seem to me to hold. Indeed, it proves too much. Doctor Meeser says that the ethical relations of parent and child can never be dissolved, that "no human law can divorce a son from his father." They are bound so closely, he declares, that neither "life nor death can un-relate them." Yet Jesus taught a man should "forsake his parents and cleave unto his wife"—"a more indissoluble relation than one absolutely indissoluble." If you carry this reasoning to its conclusion then remarriage after the death of husband or wife is also forbidden. Jesus said nothing in the verses quoted about the right of a widow or widower to remarry. Paul mentioned it only by way of reference to a prevailing custom when he was arguing about a totally different matter. Therefore, if we are going to be literalists we must reckon the remarriage of widows and widowers as adultery, but no one would think of holding such a perversion of the teachings of the Master.

Third. Is it not saner to interpret the attitude of Jesus on divorce and remarriage in the light of his whole life and total utterance? That was a complete condemnation of moral impurity in or out of the marriage relation; the insistence on the sanctity and the importance of the home; the declaration that all laws that tended to loosen the marriage bond met with his utter disapproval; that society could not endure and the kingdom of heaven could not come where cruelty, impurity and human degradation were tolerated, but that men, filled with his Spirit and utterly devoted to his priciples, had the right to work out their own application in the enactment of laws to that end.

W. Wofford T. Duncan.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

The Third Annual Anglo-Catholic Congress

The Living Church, Milwaukee

(*Condensed*)

It is noteworthy and significant that the Catholic life, not Catholic ceremonial, was emphasized throughout the Congress. The Bishop of Albany in his address of welcome, the Congress preacher in his sermon at the solemn High Mass, and the chairman in his introductory address dwelt upon holiness.

It is fitting at the beginning of a report of the Congress to quote earnest words from the chairman's opening address, from the address of welcome, and from the Congress sermon.

The Rev. Frank L. Vernon, D.D., rector of St. Mark's Church, Philadelphia, chairman, said: "Of unity, holiness, catholicity, apostolicity, we are moved to select the note of holiness for emphasis. . . It is high time we had an unfaltering belief in holiness, an unswerving allegiance to standards of living which are above debate . . . . Fasting communion is more important than High Mass. Confession is more important than incense . . . . First of all we must have holy priests, holiness must be their first concern. Sacraments and prayer must be the chief business of our parochial life. Our churches must be above all else houses of prayer. Ritual must be adequate, but it must above all things be sincere. Worship must be in spirit and in truth."

The Rt. Rev. Richard H. Nelson, D.D., Bishop of Albany, in welcoming the delegates, said: "We are assembled here because of our devotion to Him in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in whom the children of men find eternal life. . . . The saints represent a great spiritual fellowship who have sought to know Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The dominating purpose of their lives is the same as that which has drawn us together, and we shall not depart from the truth if we define the Catholic Church as the company of All Saints who are joined in sacramental union with Him who is the spiritual Head of mankind."

The Rev. J. G. H. Barry, D.D., rector of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York, and Congress preacher, continued this appeal for holy living:

"Catholicity is not and cannot be an individual thing. It is social, and the true Catholic is an energetic force for righteousness in the community to which he belongs. He is a Christian citizen. He is visualizing all questions from a Christian point of view. Not only is teaching the Christian religion an obligation we have accepted, but at the same time we have accepted the serious obligation of living it.

"I would appeal to Anglo-Catholics on that platform; the platform of a Catholic life. That we should make it impossible that we be any longer known as those who indulge in certain ceremonial habits which would be harmless did they not indicate a certain Romeward tendency, or lay stress on certain doctrines which are unusual in the Episcopal Church; but as those who stand first of all for certain fundamental principles of living, to whom holiness is the supreme quality and voca-

tion of the Christian, the reason of his existence and the condition of his attainment to his end."

The Rev. Charles Jarvis Harriman, rector of the Church of St. James-the-Less, Philadelphia, definitely defended the Catholic position on commonly raised questions, and his defense led to the larger position of loyalty to our Lord. "The sum of it all is," he concluded, "that our loyalty is not only to a cause or to an organism but to a personal Christ, the Son of God."

Fr. Harriman said the loyalty of the Anglo-Catholic group in the Episcopal Church had been called in question.

"We believe and do these things, not because they are Roman, but because they are right. They are more than Roman, they are Catholic, and the Episcopal Church is Catholic. Its name is Protestant Episcopal, but protestant is a word of various meanings. It was used of the ancient Church of England. At the Reformation she was not made new, but made free. To the jibe—where was your Church before the Reformation? the retort is—where was your face before it was washed?

"If by protestant you mean disowning papal obedience, sharing the movement for freedom, education, and individual development; public worship in English; the open Bible; we are Protestant. If you mean anti-Catholic, especially in the spirit of the sheet and hood, every man to choose his own Church, a complete break with the past, the dilemma between fundamentalism and modernism—if you mean by protestant what most Protestants seem to mean, we are not Protestant, and God forbid we ever should be.

"The men who named the Protestant Episcopal Church meant to keep to the historic Church, as they showed by the Prayer Book. They were Episcopal, retaining bishops as had been since the apostles' time, but protestant in doing so apart from the papal system; protestant in the English sense, successors to established episcopacy, not dissent. Episcopal, the name by which we are commonly known, defines our position. Protestant describes so well what we are not, it is barely honest to use it. We should drop the word Protestant, and put nothing in its place, and be known as the Episcopal Church."

The Rev. Julian Hamlin, rector of St. John's Church, Newport, R. I., read a paper, The Nature of the Church. Fr. Hamlin adequately traced the natural growth and historic development of the Church, but eloquently portrayed the Divine Society which he suggested must seldom have been absent from the mind of Jesus.

"What did our Lord leave behind Him? Not a book, not a record of His life, not a creed; but a fellowship of men and women bound to each other by a common allegiance to Him and by a victorious faith in His resurrection. It was to this fellowship that the baptism of the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost.

"Immediately the little Church was obsessed by a divine sense of mission, regarded herself as the fulfillment of the old order, possessed new coherence and unity, more adequate than the prophets ever dreamed.

"The chief glory of the Book of Common Prayer is that it has never allowed us to forget that our membership in Christ involves membership in a Christian body which is far larger than the Protestant Episcopal Church, of which the Anglican communion is but a part, and which it has never repudiated by any official expression of its mind."

The Solemn High Mass

On Wednesday morning at 10:30 the solemn pontifical Mass in the Cathedral of All Saints was the climax of the Congress. At the close of this impressive service, the congregation of 2,500 people who thronged the cathedral knelt and received the blessing of Bishop Nelson as he proceeded through the aisle.

The Sessions of the Second Day

The Rt. Rev. Campbell Gray, D.D., Bishop of Northern Indiana, whose subject was The Faithful Departed, made tender reference, before reading his paper, to the beautiful and unforgettable speech made by the late Bishop Brown at General Convention in New Orleans when he rose to plead for the practice of prayers for the dead, suggesting no more appropriate place and time than in the very center of the Holy Communion service.

Bishop Gray gave a very clear and simple explanation of the intermediary state of the departed. The prejudice against the word "purgatory," he said, originated from the abuses which clustered about this doctrine, purgation in reality being remedial and not vengeful. He said the arguments against prayers for the dead would be equally valid against prayers for the living. "The highest act of prayer is sacrifice," said Bishop Gray. "As for the living, so also for the dead, the most powerful thing we can do for them is to offer the Holy Sacrifice at the altar."

Our Lady and the Saints

Our Lady and the saints, having been turned out of our churches about for hundred years ago, and the doors slammed behind them, came back through the windows." Thus the Rev. Spence Burton, Superior S.S.J.E., prefaced his admirable paper, Our Lady and the Saints. He suggested practical methods for putting his theories into practice, such as shrines with votive candles at images and windows of the saints. Particularly he suggested praying for missionaries at the shrines of great missionaries, "and there lighting candles in honor of Him who is the Light of the world." He distinguished clearly between *latria* and *dulia*. A fine feature of this paper was the plea for Christian fellowship, cultivated and nurtured by companionship with the saints and prayerful concern for the poor, the sick, the needy, the submerged, and the oppressed.

At the Wednesday evening session the Ven. John Cole McKim, with Fr. Sakurai, S.S.J.E., representing the Church in Japan, brought greetings from the Catholic Congress there. The Rev. Robert E. Wood, of the China mission, spoke as a representative of the Holy Catholic Church of China.

Lawson Purdy, L.L.D., secretary and general director of the

Charity Organization Society, New York, expressed satisfaction in the growing desire of theological seminaries to give instruction in social work, as the clergy ought to be informed concerning social resources and problems. "Forty years ago I thought it was the duty of the clergy to preach the rights of man. I thought the message of freedom and justice so appealing that when stated it would be accepted. I saw men suffer for that belief and saw their ministry wrecked. Now I believe the clergy should first have regard for their ministry to individual souls and avoid such public utterances as may lessen their usefulness for their primary priestly function. Within these limitations they should embrace such opportunities as they may have to further the rule of right."

Dr. Purdy developed the fundamental principle of sacrifice and pain and of happiness through perfect adaption to environment.

The Missionary Charter of the Church was the subject of the paper by the Rev. Robert F. Lau, D.D., of the National Council.

"The Church could not cease to be missionary without ceasing to be. Evangelization was the justification of the existence of the early Church. It grew not by insistence upon faith and order but by missionary zeal. . . . Interest in the missionary program of the Church is the acid test of the claim to be Catholic. We must justify our existence as Catholics by sharing in the missionary enterprise of our communion. Otherwise we have a name that we are living but are dead."

Dr. Lau put some very pertinent questions, such as the desire at home for paid choirs and the desire in China for hospitals.

Two College Presidents

Kenneth C. M. Sills, LL.D., president of Bowdoin College, read a paper on The Church and Education. He spoke strongly in favor of the religious day school and of the realization it gives children that the community is interested in religious instruction, albeit the whole plan is yet experimental. He referred to the attempt to get rid of parochial schools as thoroughly vicious and un-American. He referred also with a degree of satisfaction to the faculty of the Church for private schools and suggested that they should include children from a greater range of homes, especially those of working men. He likewise referred to our Church colleges as being distinguished for graduating men of real culture.

"It is a mistake to treat the college student as a type and not as an individual. He needs a priest for the same reason the rest of us do. . . . Laymen as well as clergy should try to keep more in touch with the religious life of boys and girls in college. Frequently they have no hint that people take the least interest in their Church relations, hence is it any wonder they feel religion is of no particular importance?"

Dr. Sills emphasized the great and perennial need of better training for the Christian ministry:

"We should strive to make our theological seminaries equal to other schools of medicine, law, science, and business training. The

type of men studying for Orders is improving, but stronger men should be encouraged. We need to pay more attention to the scholarship of teachers in our seminaries. . . . It is the fault of the Church that not more men are devoted to scholarship. We provide no means for scholarly men to live scholarly lives, and the Church cannot hold its own without scholarly leadership."

Following Dr. Sills, the president of St. Stephen's College, the Rev. Bernard I. Bell, D.D., read a paper on The Church, the College Student, and Morals.

"Confused thinking and confused talking undermines the respect of undergraduates for so-called Christian morals. It is futile to attempt to make people live like Christians when they are not Christians. We live in a pagan world as did the Lord Jesus Christ and as did St. Paul. Christians are now and always have been and probably always will be a minority. What is right for others is not right for us, and what is wrong for us may not be wrong for them. We should say to the student, If you wish Christ's grace, if you believe He is the way, the sustainer and lover of souls, then accept only the ethical judgment of those who through the centuries have lived near Him and learned about Him. . . . The way to change the undergraduate's morals and to ensure that he shall continue to maintain the standards of Christendom is to make him a Catholic Christian—and there is no other way in the world."

The Rev. Charles Townsend, Jr., rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Rosemont, Pa., read a paper, Saints in the Making. "If we want to be saints we have the power to become saints. The real enemy of our spiritual life is commonplace dullness of routine and the lack of desire for the life of prayer and devotion. This is demonstrated by the disregard of daily Mass and the disinterest in holy days. . . . We who call ourselves Catholic Christians need to make much more of the good old evangelical truth of assurance, the keynote of true evangelicalism, without which there can be no true Catholicism. . . .

"The Episcopal Church will continue to nurture respectable Christians but will never make saints until in every parish and mission, every city and hamlet, she restores the Sacrament of the Altar to the central place in her worship. . . . The need, the purpose, the only goal of the Christian religion and therefore of the Catholic is to make saints in the image and after the likeness of the sacred humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Conclusion

The official report of the registration of the Congress is that 1,033 persons were enrolled, while many unregistered persons attended the various sessions.

There were eight altars in the cathedral and Masses were said from 6 to 9 o'clock daily. There were communions at 7 and 8. On Thursday a requiem Mass was said in the chapel of St. Michael and All Angels for Bishop Lines, at which the Rev. C. N. Lathrop was celebrant.

Book Review

(When ordering books, please mention this Magzaine.)
NOTE—Reviews, when not signed, are by the Editor.

A Temple of Topaz, by *F. W. Boreham.* The Abingdon Press, 1928. 272 pages, $1.75.

This is Mr. Boreham's latest, the twenty-first of his literary career. He is fond of quaint, unusual titles ("A Casket of Cameos"; "Rubble and Roseleaves"; "Wisps of Wildfire"); so this time it is "A Temple of Topaz." This volume brings his "Texts that made History" series to a close, a group that had made a special appeal to ministers on account of its rich homiletical material. Some of the men who, in the present volume, are said to have been influenced by certain texts, are: Abraham Lincoln (the religious growth of the man is impressively described); Henry Drummond ("The Greatest of these is Love"); John Milton ("O give thanks unto the Lord . . . ."); General Gordon; Joseph Addison ("The Lord is my Shepherd"), etc. The two life stories that interested us most in the book, are those of St. Patrick and Victor Hugo. The other day we saw a statement, somewhere, that St. Patrick had never lived. We knew that it was hard "to distinguish fact from tradition" in his life, but yet one should not pour out the child with the bath water. At any rate, to Boreham St. Patrick was a real person, and a wonderfully consecrated Christian. The text he assigns him is, "For me, Life is Christ," and he draws a picture of him that will satisfy the most enthusiastic Irishman.

Then, another wholehearted tribute Boreham pays to Victor Hugo (the "crowning glory of the 19th century, and, in all ages, second only to Shakespeare," according to Swinburne). He analyses his chief works and their characters, especially the "Hunchback of Notre Dame," and finds that their spiritual message may be summed up in Paul's word: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, but the greatest . . . charity."

The book is in Boreham's best vein: fresh, warm-hearted, exhibiting the skill of the literary artist; furnishing to preachers a rich store of inspiring illustrations.

The Heights of Christian Unity. A Plea for One Holy Catholic Church by Doremus A. Hayes, Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Graduate School of Theology, Evanston, Ills. The Abbingdon Press, 1927. 271 pages, $1.75.

The burden of this book is the same as was on the Master's mind when he prayed his last great prayer, "that they all might be one." It was written while the Lausanne Conference was in the process of preparation. The ideal that the author cherishes for Christendom is

as ambitious as the apostle's when, in Ephesians IV, he speaks of the great common fundamentals that make the church, the body of Christ, one. This unity could not rest on any set of opinions concerning Jesus Christ; it rests on loyalty to Christ himself. It will always be impossible, he thinks, for all to subscribe to one system of intellectual beliefs. If organic unity for the church is to be achieved it must be sought with the mind free from established forms and creeds; to have the spirit of the Christ will be more important than to have certain doctrines about him. In the past this cause has been slow of advance, but there are now signs that the tide is turning (United Lutheran Church; United Church of Canada).

There are hindrances in the way. Churches have different organizations (episcopal and non-episcopal); different ideas of worship and the sacraments; they have different creedal statements. If there is to come any real unity there must be mutual toleration. We shall never think the same on all these things. With some sacraments and orders are of greatest importance; with some, confessions and theological formulations. Neither the ones nor the others should be so overestimated as to preclude Christian unity.

The author takes particular pains to combat undue emphasis on the creeds. There was difference of opinions even in the bible, and all along in the history of the church. Creeds are changeable, they are fallible, they are subject to interpretation. They were adopted by majority votes; they are but opinions. If subscription to creeds is required it should be understood only as accepting that they affirm essential elements in the Christian faith; that they are ancient and incomplete symbols of scriptural Christian faith, to be subject to personal interpretation in reasonable liberty.

It will be noticed that the position of the author on the creeds is rather too vague and hazy to give satisfaction; that the apostles were more outspoken on the main facts of the life and work of Christ. It may also be mentioned that the churches assembled at Lausanne, last summer, found it impossible to relegate the creeds to a position of inferiority.

As to the outlook of the cause of Christian unity, the writer is quite optimistic. His more immediate hope is for the consolidation, or, rather, the organic union of Protestantism; and, after that, he takes into consideration even a unification of Catholicism and Protestantism. It may take a hundred years (Speer), but it is sure to come. Of the non-Catholic churches the Episcopal church is, in his opinion, best fitted to bring about a union of the Roman Catholic and Protestant communions because it has elements of both in its life and constitution.

The experience at Lausanne has somewhat shaken our faith that the writer is right in assigning the Church of England the role of peacemaker. That Church depends too much on the legend of apostolic succession, and the growing strength of the Anglo-Catholics alienates it from the Protestant world.

The author knows that organic union is still in the remote future. Our nearer task is to establish closer relations between kindred

Protestant groups, after that, to unite all Protestantism. If we are to succeed in this great undertaking, we need "humility, tolerance, forbearance, appreciation and the leadership of the Spirit."

The book is a candid, earnest, well-informed, hopeful plea for the seemingly so remote, and yet so biblical and Christian, realization of the spiritual unity of the Church.

How to Understand Philosophy. From Socrates to Bergson by A. E. Baker. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1927, 189 pages.

Hodder and Stoughton have for some time been publishing a "People's Library," consisting of brief volumes, written in popular language, on subjects of general interest to readers who want to be informed. Some of the titles are: "Everyday Biology"; "The Story of the Renaissance"; "Atoms and Electrons"; "How to Read History"; "How to enjoy the Bible"; "The Middle Ages"; "How to enjoy the old Masters." One sees the subjects are such as would appeal to one who aims at general culture, while retaining, perhaps, a slightly higher preference for the "humanities" than for the sciences.

The book under discussion is really an outline of a history of philosophy. Beginning with the great Greek thinkers, the author passes on to the schools that sought in philosophy a means to regulate human conduct rather than find ultimate reality. Then follows a discussion of Neo-Platonism (the mystic element in Plato) and its effect on the Christian fathers (Clement of Alexandria, Augustine). A chapter is given to the Middle Ages, from Boethins ("Consolations of Philosophy") to the Schoolmen (from Anselm to William of Ockham); one to the Renaissance and the Reformation. Here Francis Bacon (the man "who moved the intellects which have moved the world") and Descartes (the "Copernicus of modern philosophy") are treated. The next chapter deals with the great English thinkers, Hobbes, J. Locke, Berkeley and Hume. We then come to Spinoza and Leibnitz; to Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer; finally to Lotze and Nietzsche. The book closes with a chapter on Comte, H. Spencer, Will. James and Bergson.

It seems natural when reviewing a book like this one, to think of a similar one that came but only a short while ago. We mean, of course, Durant's "Story of Philosophy."

It is an odious comparison, for the present author never even dreamed of attempting such a pretentious work. He is perfectly frank about it; he knows it is "neither an original nor an adequate" production (his own words). It is true he does not succeed in making the book interesting reading. But that would be a hard task for any one writing such an outline on such a subject. He does succeed in giving a general survey of the whole field. To make the story of philosophy a thrilling experience, one would have to spice it, as Durant has done, plentifully with anecdote and a clever choice of quotations from the philosophers themselves. Besides, one would have to omit much of their speculation and enlarge only on those aspects of their systems that people understand.

Religious Experience and Scientific Method, by *Henry Nelson Wieman*, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, Occidental College. The Macmillan Company, 1926, 387 pages.

Professor Draper said many years ago that in the development of the race three periods may roughly be distinguished: the age of faith, the age of doubt, and the age of science. The middle ages were built on faith. The schoolmen started with the assumption that the divine revelation was absolutely dependable, and then they went to work to show that philosophy agreed with revelation. The modern age, ushered in by the renaissance, unshackled the human mind. It was the age of investigation. Science began to move its wings. The inductive method (F. Bacon) subjected all traditional data to the test of experiment. It was, therefore, an age of doubt. The 19th century brought this development to maturity. Through doubt and the experimental method we arrived at science. Henceforth only the things established by science partake of the nature of reality; all the rest is discarded, belonging to a pre-scientific stage.

If Draper's analysis is correct—and many think so—the cause of religion is in a bad way. Heretofore it had been defending its ground against philosophy, with more or less success. The philosophers have, after all, nothing but their own speculations to fall back on when discussing ultimate reality; and the authority of divine revelation and the experience of the religious soul seem to be safer guides than those. But now we find ourselves confronted with natural science, which keeps close to the facts, examines them with painstaking observation and searching analysis, and arrives at conclusions buttressed by a wealth of evidence that appear to be inescapable.

Nevertheless religion has taken up the challenge. It is the glory of religion—the Christian religion at least—that it has a wonderful power of adaptation. Not only does it reveal from one period to another ever new elements of value and strength that had not been suspected before. It also seems to be able to meet every new foe and withstand him successfully on his own ground.

The books dealing with the problems that natural science casts up are legion. Prof. Wieman's is one of the latest. He undertakes to defend religion with the very weapon that, according to many, is dealing it the death blow, the scientific method. It is his ambition to make religion respectable to the men of science. He is enamored with the method of science, which has added so much to the wealth of human life. If we apply it in the field of religion it may clarify much that is now in obscurity. It may even give us a better knowledge of the nature of God, for we do not yet have a knowledge of God that can be called scientific.

This must sound very startling to our readers. Let us, however, not misunderstand our author. He does believe that one becomes aware of God by a kind of mystical experience. He, furthermore, believes that God is something that cannot be doubted. He is "that which is supremely significant in all the universe for human living,

however known or unknown he may be." "In this sense, with this minimum meaning, he cannot be denied." We can never cognize him by theoretical thought only. That attitude, distinguished from the critical and practical thought that takes in "the total object" of religious experience, he calls contemplation. Contemplation, he says, culminates in the discernment of God. It is worship balanced between mysticism and thinking. But then he goes on to say that religious experience is just as much a *sensuous* experience as any others. If religion is not based on the data of sense it will lose all intellectual standing. If God is not an object of sensuous experience he is one of speculation only, or else religious experience will degenerate into sentimentality, than which there is nothing less worthful or enduring.

The author does not try to prove this strange assertion, and we do not see how he could. In his endeavor to keep caste with the scientists he makes concessions that will neither satisfy the scientists nor be admitted by the religious. We also challenge his claim that the existence of God cannot be doubted. There are millions of men who have doubted it in the past and doubt it in the present. It is true that his existence cannot be denied, but it can neither be proved. Since Kant, it has been generally admitted that theoretical proofs of God's existence are not compelling. Kant postulated the existence of God from moral views. To him the categorical imperative was an absolute fact in the moral world, and he felt thereby compelled to posit a God at the center of the moral universe to guarantee the stability of the moral order and its eventual outcome.

We believe in God by faith, which is an inner sense whereby we become aware of him, or have a religious experience of him. It is true, as the author insists again and again, that this immediate experience (by faith) is not knowledge. But it is not true that it becomes knowledge by the application of the scientific method. Nor is it true that it becomes knowledge by calling in philosophy as the interpreter, as Dr. Buckham suggests in his reply to Dr. Wieman (in the "Christian Century," Feb. 23, 1928). To interpret the contents of religious experience is the function of theology, and theology needs, in this function, first of all, the fountain head of religious experience, namely the Word of God; and then science, philosophy, history and, perhaps, a good many other things. At any rate, we believe the author is entirely wrong when he says that we reach verifiable knowledge concerning the existence and nature of God by science.

The writer's book has three parts. In the first he seeks to show why religion needs science. Science's service is chiefly corrective. It saves religion from sentimentality and delivers it from the shackles of tradition. In the second part we learn why science needs religion. Religion opens the mind to the whole wealth of experience, not only to those facts that are observed and studied by the natural sciences (the material world). While science helps form the habits that make for efficiency in the world of fact, religion calls to life the free impulses that make human life rich and free. Religion develops the personality and provides for the right relations between personali-

ties by the bond of love which it teaches to find in the very center of the universe. Finally, religion keeps alive the conviction that the scientifically defined world is only part of the total fact of experience.

In the last part the author speaks of the nature and function of religion. He touches on a good many points, on Freudian psychoanalysis; on Dr. James's pragmatism; on the mission of reflective thought in bringing out the meaning of religious experience; or the "emergence" of religion, i. e. the historical development of religious sense and its representatives. But what he does not do is give us a satisfactory interpretation of the nature of religion. And this because he does not have an adequate definition of God. Listen to his terminology, "In religious awareness we become responsive to the fullest mass of concrete experience"; or, "we become responsive to the undifferentiated mass of the innumerable stimuli playing upon us"; or, "to worship means to subject oneself to that total mass of stimulation which is playing upon us all the time"; or, "in religious consciousness we become aware of a mass of merged data, so merged as to be a single unanalyzed and unsifted datum."

What is, according to these statements, the nature of God but the "undifferentiated mass of innumerable stimuli playing upon us"? and religion is "becoming aware of these stimuli and reacting to them." It is a definition altogether in harmony perhaps with biological science, and in its vagueness absolutely useless and totally inadequate for any practical or theoretical religious use. In his second book, the "Wrestle with Truth" (which we may review at some later date) the author improves a little on this definition explaining that God is "that feature of our total environment which most vitally affects the continuance and welfare of human life," or "that character of events to which man must adjust himself for his greatest good." That "feature of our total environment"! What can you do with this? He calls it a "minimum idea" of God and he adheres to it because that much of the God idea seems at least absolutely certain. But why call it that "feature of our environment" or that "character of events" when only a *personal* God will suffice?

He says in one place that the nature of religion should not be interpreted by what it was in its first emergence, but by its developed stage; just as we do not define astronomy by what it was as astrology, or chemistry as alchemy. If that is a correct procedure why then tell us that God is a feature of our total environment instead of saying that he is the creative spirit, or something better yet, in the personal sphere.

The author moves in the biological and psychological field with wonderful ease. The general reader, at times, won't find it so easy to follow for Dr. Wieman is not as generous with illustrations as his admired master, W. James, was. We are of the opinion that the scientific method will not be able to solve the tasks he sets it. Still while we by no means worry about the scientists crowding religion off the stage, it may be a good thing to apply their methods and see how far we get with it.

Current Christian Thinking, by *Gerald Bivney Smith.* The University of Chicago Press, 1928, 209 pages.

This book by G. B. Smith (co-editor with Shailer Matthews of "the Dictionary of Religion and Ethics") is a most interesting and lucid interpretation of the current religious thought in this country. In looking over the subjects discussed we notice, however, a certain one-sidedness. The author dwells entirely on the qustions raised by the conflict between Modernists and Fundamentalists; or, in other words, on the disturbances scientific inquiry has caused in the field of theology. He points out the far-reaching effects it is having on doctrinal beliefs, but he has nothing to say on the great social issues of the day and their relation to the ethics of Jesus. His course, therefore, is in marked contrast to the one pursued by R. Niebuhr, in his recent book. Niebuhr is little disturbed by the divergence between religion and science, and very much by the abyss separating the ethics of Jesus from the ethics of the industrial system, more or less sanctioned, or tolerated, by the church. Smith ignores this all-important issue entirely.

The author begins his survey with two chapters on Catholicism and Protestantism. He describes the theological system of the former correctly although, in trying to show how the Catholic church maintains its hold on the masses, he forgets to mention the fact that the church keeps the training of its youth under control from the beginning to the end and never even releases the social life of its people.

According to him the Protestants were medieval in their original theology. The former rejected the authority of the church and abolished the sacramental system. But in place of an infallible pope they put the infallible bible; and since they had no pope to guarantee the infallible interpretation of the bible, the creeds and confessions of the church came to have an authoritative position. He who desired to be a teacher in the church had to accept their doctrinal statements. The difference between Catholics and Protestants, Professor Smith thinks, is less significant than between Fundamentalists and Modernists.

Modernism is the attempt to interpret religious beliefs by bringing modern ideas to the service of religion. The scientific method of inquiry used in other fields of investigation, Modernism has introduced to the study of the bible and of religion. The bible has been studied like any other book and it has been found to be less infallible than it was held to be. It has also been found that religion is a variable quantity changing with man's social and cultural ideas. The bible does not contain an authoritative revelation but is a record of the growing and groping religious mind of the race. Science, at one time shackled by ecclesiastical authority, has emancipated itself. It studies all facts without reference to a theological source or interpretation. And Modernism, following in its steps, has learned to study religion not by simply asking what the bible says but by trying to find what is inherently convincing.

Modernism, being thus dependent on a scientific inquiry that never ends, is reluctant to formulate a creed. It would be impossible to draw up one that would satisfy any great number of individuals. It approves the purpose of ancient beliefs, i. e. their intention to express what any particular age believed at the time; but it wants to revise their contents so as to bring them up to date.

The writer has an interesting chapter on "the Appeal to Experience and to Christ" in theology. Here Albrecht Ritschl's position is ably sketched. Christianity is life rather than doctrine. There may be disagreement on doctrine but we all may share in Christian experience. Biblical criticism and philosophic speculations create a spirit of insecurity. Where can we find a sure ground for our faith? According to Ritschl this can be found in "value judgments." Religion must be appreciated, not proved. If we owe to our Christian experience a feeling of security and an inspiration to noble living, then *for us* it is a reality whatever biblical criticism may say on this or that part of the biblical record, whatever philosophy may say on the metaphysics of the Christian system. In order to guard this reliance on value judgments from the charge of subjectivism, Ritschl says the objective fact of Christ is the cause of our feeling of religious assurance. The person of Jesus, the "historical" Jesus (not the Jesus of dogma) as we come in contact with him is studying the New Testament, makes an "overmastering impression" on us (W. Herrmann). This experience of Christ speaks with authority to us on God and God's plan. It gives us victorious trust in God and love to man.

But, says the writer, if only what is Christian in quality can be experienced and retained, what about the Trinity, the two natures in Christ, the atonement, the origin of man, eschatology. They cannot be experienced, are they then to go? The appeal to Christ is made by so many divergent people and churches. It does not lead to certain results. The modern theologian, therefore, no longer tries to reproduce biblical doctrines. Jesus is to him no formal authority any more but an inspiration, a stimulus to noble life. We have learned to think in terms of modern life, not on any authoritative pattern.

In a chapter on the "Natural World" we hear that the supernatural element has been eliminated from scientific investigation; that some have tried to save their faith in God by teaching his *immanence* rather than his transcendence; that Christian Science and New Thought have built their systems—and their optimism—on this. "God can be approached in all reality; he is always revealing himself; man is finite but the infinite is in him; Jesus was God, so are we; the incarnation takes place not only in Christ but in everybody." The writer believes that it may be comfortable to believe that "God is in heaven and all is well with his world," but that this optimism is not in harmony with natural science.

In the "Modern Quest for God" sanctions for God's existence are drawn from human experience. Does religion, interpreted in experiential rather than in theological terms, require a theistic God? We

find that faith in the divine guidance of nations has vanished (along with the "divine right" of kings). Again, that the God-idea is not of the slightest use to the scientists. If they profess belief in God it is for the most part only a vague emotional inheritance. We see that in practical life material comfort depends on economic factors rather than on generalized moral attitudes. Furthermore, the study of the history of religion shows that religion outgrows its theologies. God is seen to be the pictorial representation of the group idea. This idea changes with conditions. The monarchical conception gives place to the democratic; autocracy yields to the principle of cooperation. God is often identified with humanistic ideals: the "Kingdom of God."

Some sort of cosmic support seems indispensable. But since the cosmic processes are indifferent to human values, a "finite God," who requires human cooperation for the realization of his ends, appears to many to have the greater evidence on his side. Just what conception of God will ultimately prevail no one can tell; but it is doubtful whether theism of the usual type will continue to be a convincing way of stating a religious view of the world. Our conception of God must be formulated in "*tentative* terms, growing out of our religious relationship to what we worship in our cosmic environment. Men may believe in God without being able to define him."

"If the attempt should be made to define God, not in terms of a "first" cause of remote beginnings, but rather as a power residing in the evolutionary process luring things on to a better future, we might see a new theology which would draw largely on the findings of modern science."

After following the argument of the book to the end, we are in a position to examine the conclusion which the writer has reached. Briefly stated they are that there is no definite conclusion. He has no valid idea of God to offer. Whatever formulation he might suggest would be only *tentative*, to be modified or entirely overthrown by natural science to-morrow. It requires no argument to show that there was no such haziness about God in the minds of the Jewish prophets. If there had been they would not have become the makers of Israel's history, nor the authorities to whom the apostles of the social gospel of to-day refer back with wonderment. Nor was such haziness in the mind of Jesus, with whom the Father-God was the very source of his life and power. Nor with the apostles or their converts, who found in their faith in God and Jesus, his Son, a "cosmic support" that all the pressure of an unfavorable environment could not break.

Such faith can and must be found to-day by the way of spiritual experience. The main source of such experience is the word of God. Our contact with nature may give us "a certain mystical feeling that there is some power in the evolutionary process luring things on to a better future." But that there is a God who loves us, saves us, reconstructs us and will reconstruct society—such faith can only be found in and maintained by the Word, and in growing spiritual union with Jesus Christ.